DE QUINCEY'S WORKS.

VOLUME VIII.



Charles Lamb

LEADERS IN LITERATURE

WITH A NOTICE OF

TRADITIONAL ERRORS AFFECTING THEM

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PREFATORY NOTICE.

THE difficulty of framing titles for books—such as shall adequately indicate their separate purposes and functions, whilst, at the same time, offering some colourable air of novelty, is sufficiently understood. But the full pressure of that difficulty, as it sometimes exists, and as, in fact, it exists in the case immediately before us, is but imperfectly appreciated. Where certain elements have been from the first intended to take their station, side by side, in the same volume, they will have been trained artificially beforehand into a fitness for co-membership in a whole. But the difficulty is prodigiously aggravated when the separate parts, that are suddenly and unexpectedly required to cohere into a systematic whole, arose originally upon casual and disconnected impulses, without any view to final convergement, or any reference whatever to a central principle. The difficulty, in extreme cases of this nature, ripens into an impossibility. Where there are absolutely no points of logical contact, it becomes a mere fantastic chase after a rainbow to pursue any comprehensive title such as can override the whole. In a case of that nature some indulgence may be reasonably challenged; and a dispensation

claimed from that rigour of logic which would otherwise govern the case.

The writers here represented as Leaders in Literature, the reader will understand to be Herodotus, Plato, and Pope. All of them hold the rank of leaders *de facto:* in what degree that of leaders also *de jure*, or virtually such by any large and durable influence upon the thoughts and feelings of past and coming generations, may be doubted, at least with respect to that one of them, viz, Plato, who at present seems protected the most by a superstitious reverence; for all reverence must be looked on as superstitious which is guaranteed neither by disinterested and adequate authority, nor by personal acquaintance with its object. The readers of Plato, if such a class anywhere exists, must be aware of his profound failure in an attempt to explore the etymology of a few Grecian words. Such a failure, considering the etymological resources then at the command of Greek philology, was inevitable. It is no subject for blame. But not the less it suggests, as its own direct consequence, what *is* a subject for the heaviest, viz., the obstinate vassalage to purely *verbal* fancies, which is continually a fruitful source of erring and misleading speculation to Plato. In the last book of *The Republic* we have a lively instance of this. Plato there argues two separate questions: first, the Immortality of the Soul (more elabo rately treated in the *Phædo*); secondly, the grounds upon which he expelled the Poets, and Homer beyond all others, from his immaculate Commonwealth. Of this ideal Commonwealth it is sufficient to say, that the one capital vice

which has ruined Asia, and laid her (speaking generally) a contemptible and helpless victim at the feet of Christendom, viz., polygamy and sexual effeminacy, carried to the last conceivable excesses, is by Plato laid down deliberately as the basis of his social system. And, as if this were not enough, infanticide is superadded as the crown and glorifying *aureola* of the whole diabolical economy. After this, the reader will feel some curiosity to learn what it is by which the Poets could signalize their immorality in Plato's eyes. The Platonic reason assigned for tabooing the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and the whole of the Tragic drama, is this: and it will be seen that the first manifestation of the evil redressed lies in the scenic poets, but the fountain of the offence lies in Homer. Tragedy, says Plato, seeks as its main object to extort tears and groans from the audience in sympathy with the distress on the stage. Well, why not? Because there is some obligation (where seated, or by whom enacted, Plato is careful to conceal) which makes such sympathy, or such expressions of sympathy, improper. But in what way improper? The insinuation is—as being effeminate, and such as men rightly seek to hide. Here, then, we have, as the main legislatorial sanction and rule of conduct, a sensitive horror of indecorum. And the supposed law, or rule, to which Plato appeals for his justification, is a pure verbal chimera, without even a plausible ground. And for such a reason the sole noble revelation of moral feeling in Grecian poetry is laid under an interdict. But why is Homer compromised by this interdict? Simply on the ground (a most

false one) that he is originally answerable for the dramatic stories employed by the scenic poets. Now, in order to show the careless reading of Plato, it is sufficient to remark briefly, that a large proportion of the Greek tragedies move by terror, by horror, by sympathy with the unknown mysteries surrounding human nature, and are of a nature to repel tears; and that for three out of four such ground-works of the tragic poetry Homer is noways responsible. It is also altogether overlooked by Plato that in the grandeur of the choral music, in the mazes of the symbolic dances, and in the awful magnitude of the spectacle (spectacle and spectators taken as a whole), a provision is made for elevating the mind far above the region of effeminate sensibilities. Milton, with his Christian standard of purity and holiness, found *that* beyond measure noble which Plato, the organizer of polygamy and wholesale infanticide, rejects as immoral!

The traditional errors affecting literature, which it is something even to indicate, are these:—

First,—The inadequate distinction made (together with its consequences) between the Literature of Power, on the one hand, and the Literature of Knowledge, on the other.

Secondly,—The imbecility of that critical canon prevailing through the last 150 years, which has referred the poetry of Dryden and Pope to an imaginary *French* School.*

* "In the interest" (to use a slang phrase just now coming into currency) of enlightened patriotism, and secondly, in the interest of

Thirdly,—The poverty of conception, which has sought the characteristic distinction of Pope in some supposed quality of *correctness.*

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truth, an Englishman must rejoice upon seeing such a ridiculous pretension reduced to its own windy value; but not, thirdly, in the interest of Pope. For, if ever man deserved to suffer by an injurious falsehood, it was surely that man who had piloted and opened a channel for such a falsehood by a forerunning falsehood of his own; and that man was Pope. He, upon the meanest and shallowest of temptations, viz., simply to bring a celebrated Latin passage within easy reach of a plausible English parody, wrote, printed, and published, the very wildest, grossest, most extravagant fiction that ever the mythologists of Fairy-land have coined, or ancient nurse has chanted to believing infants. Credulity is among the simple graces of infancy: and if we, the littérateurs of earth, could revolve into that happy stage of life, we should find a pure delight in Pope's version of the Horatian Epistle which contains the passage beginning

"Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio."

[*i.e.*, Greece being made captive, in *her* turn made captive her savage conqueror, and thus introduced the arts into uncultured Latium.] Pope, on reading this, was struck with a lively impression of the effect likely to be attained by running a parallel to the ancient case as between Greece matched against Rome, and the modern case as between France matched against England. One section of such a parallel was really provided by prosaic history. No need for romance in this stage of the parallel. Rome had conquered Greece: doubt there could be none that England had conquered France, and had seated two of her kings on the French throne. So far all was sound and weather-proof. Now, if it could but be added, that France, like Greece, had been found by her conqueror equipped with a full-blown literature, which the illiterate victor had carried back to his own home, in that case, how beautiful a rehearsal of the fifteenth century *after* Christ lay hid in the second and third centuries *before* Christ. Unhappily, no syllable of all this could be found in history, even when written by Frenchmen. But Pope, resolute that he would not be baulked of his showy parallel by any scoundrel of a truth-seeker, recollected in time—that what he could not find, he might forge. And thus arose the monstrous fiction

Fourthly,—The illogical and contradictory idea of what is called *Didactic* Poetry. This teaching (or didactic) function is generally understood to constitute the characteristic and differential distinction of didactic poetry; and that idea has sometimes misled the critic, but still more has misdirected the poet. Upon attentive reflection it will be seen that the function of teaching is not the *power* in such poetry, but the *resistance* to be overcome; that it is not *by* teaching that didactic poetry moves, but *in spite of teaching*.

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of a French literature antecedent to Agincourt (1415), and a literature *which served as a model to England!* It is pleasant to consider upon what English poet's fame this fable would chiefly have operated injuriously. Retributive would have been the punishment to Pope, if it had been argued by a Frenchman—"How can this man pretend to evade the charge of belonging to a French school, who himself derived all English literature from a supposed French literature at the very opening of the fifteenth century—a period which we French regard as entirely barbarous. But observe—according to the candid Pope, the barbarism of France sufficed for the culture of England!"

threatening to cudgel anybody who disputes his friend's assertion; yet sometimes the thought expressed and adorned by the poet had been prompted by the divine. This only can account for the savage crotchets, paradoxes, and conceits which disfigure Pope's later edition of his satires.

Truth, even of the most appreciable order, truth of history, goes to wreck continually under the perversities of Pope's satire applied to celebrated men; and as to the higher truth of philosophy, it was still less likely to survive amongst the struggles for striking effects and startling contrasts. But worse by far are Pope's satiric sketches of women, as carrying the same outrages on good sense to a far greater excess; and as these expose more brightly the false principles on which he worked, and have really been the chief ground of tainting Pope's memory with the reputation of a woman-hater (which he was *not*), they are worthy of separate notice.

It is painful to follow a man of genius through a succession of inanities descending into absolute nonsense, and of vulgar fictions sometimes terminating in brutalities. These are harsh words, but not harsh enough by half as applied to Pope's gallery of female portraits. What is the key to his failure? It is simply that, throughout this whole satiric section, not one word is spoken in sincerity of heart, or with any vestige of self-belief. The case was one of those so often witnessed, where either the indiscretion of friends, or some impulse of erring vanity in the writer, had put him upon undertaking a task in which he had too little natural interest to have either thought upon it with originality, or observed upon it with fidelity. Sometimes the mere coercion of system drives a man into such a folly. He treats a subject which branches into A, B, and C. Having discussed A and B, upon which he really *had* something to

offer, he thinks it necessary to integrate his work by going forward to C, on which he knows nothing at all, and, what is even worse, for which, in his heart, he cares nothing at all. Fatal is all falsehood. Nothing is so sure to betray a man into the abject degradation of self-exposure as pretending to a knowledge which he has not, or to an enthusiasm which is counterfeit. By whatever mistake Pope found himself pledged to write upon the characters of women, it was singularly unfortunate that he had begun by denying to women any characters at all.

> "Matter too soft a lasting mark to bear,
> And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair."

Well for *him* if he had stuck to that liberal doctrine: "Least said, soonest mended." And *much* he could not easily have said upon a subject that he had pronounced all but a nonentity. In Van Troil's work, or in Horrebow's, upon Iceland, there is a well-known chapter regularly booked in the index—*Concerning the Snakes of Iceland.* This is the title, the running rubric; and the body of the chapter consists of these words—"There *are* no snakes in Iceland." That chapter is soon studied, and furnishes very little opening for foot-notes or supplements. Some people have thought that Mr. Van T. might, with advantage, have amputated this unsnaky chapter on snakes; but, at least, nobody can accuse him of forgetting his own extermination of snakes from Iceland, and proceeding immediately to describe such horrible snakes as eye had never beheld amongst the afflictions of the island. Snakes there are none, he had protested; and, true to his word, the faithful man never wanders into any description of Icelandic snakes. Not so our satiric poet. He, with Mahometan liberality, had denied characters (*i.e.*, souls) to women. "Most

women," he says, "have no character at all;"* yet, for all that, finding himself pledged to treat this very subject of female characters, he introduces us to a museum of monsters in that department, such as few fancies could create, and no logic can rationally explain. What was he to do? He had entered upon a theme, he had pledged himself to a chase, on which, as the result has shown, he had not one solitary thought—good, bad, or indifferent. Total bankruptcy was impending. Yet he was aware of a deep interest connected with this section of his satires; and, to meet this interest, he invented what was pungent, when he found nothing to record which was true.

It is a consequence of this desperate resource—this plunge into absolute fiction—that the true objection to Pope's satiric sketches of the other sex ought not to arise amongst women, as the people that suffered by his malice, but amongst readers generally, as the people that suffered by his fraud. He has promised one thing, and done another. He has promised a chapter in the zoology of nature, and he gives us a chapter in the fabulous zoology

* By what might seem a strange oversight, but which, in fact, is a very natural oversight to one who was not uttering one word in which he seriously believed, Pope, in a prose note on verse 207, roundly asserts, "that the particular characters of women are *more various* than those of men." It is no evasion of this insufferable contradiction, that he couples with the greater variety of *characters* in women a greater uniformity in what he presumes to be their *ruling passion*. Even as to this ruling passion he cannot agree with himself for ten minutes; generally, he says, it is the love of pleasure; but sometimes (as at verse 208) forgetting this monotony, he ascribes to women a dualism of passions—love of pleasure, and love of power—which dualism of itself must be a source of self conflict, and, therefore, of inexhaustible variety in character:

"Those only fix'd, they first or last obey—
The love of pleasure and the love of sway."

of the herald's college. A tigress is not much within ordinary experience, still there *is* such a creature; and in default of a better choice, that is, of a choice settling on a more familiar object, we are content to accept a good description of a tigress. We are reconciled; but we are *not* reconciled to a description, however spirited, of a basilisk. A viper might do; but not, if you please, a dragoness or a harpy. The describer knows, as well as any of us the spectators know, that he is romancing; the *incredulus odi* overmasters us all; and we cannot submit to be detained by a picture which, according to the shifting humour of the poet, angry or laughing, is a lie where it is not a jest, is an affront to the truth of nature, where it is not confessedly an extravagance of drollery. In a playful fiction, we can submit with pleasure to the most enormous exaggerations; but then they must be offered as such. These of Pope's are not *so* offered, but as serious portraits; and in that character they affect us as odious and malignant libels. The malignity was not real,—as indeed nothing was real, but a condiment for hiding insipidity. Let us examine two or three of them, equally with a view to the possibility of the object described, and to the merits of the description.

> "How soft is Silia! fearful to offend;
> The frail one's advocate, the weak one's friend.
> To *her* Calista proved her conduct nice;
> And good Simplicius asks of *her* advice."

Here we have the general outline of Silia's character; not particularly striking, but intelligible. She has a suavity of disposition that accommodates itself to all infirmities. And the worst thing one apprehends in her is—falseness: people with such honeyed breath for *present* frailties, are apt to exhale their rancour upon them when a little out of

hearing. But really now this is no foible of Silia's. One likes her very well, and would be glad of her company to tea. For the dramatic reader knows who Calista is; and if Silia has indulgence for *her*, she must be a thoroughly tolerant creature. Where is her fault, then? You shall hear—

> "Sudden she storms! she raves!—You tip the wink,
> But spare your censure; Silia does *not* drink.
> All eyes may see from what the change arose:
> All eyes may see—(see what?)—a pimple on her nose."

Silia, the dulcet, is suddenly transformed into Silia the fury. But why? The guest replies to that question by *winking* at his fellow-guest; which most atrocious of vulgarities in act is expressed by the most odiously vulgar of phrases—he *tips* the wink—meaning to tip an insinuation that Silia is intoxicated. Not so, says the poet—drinking is no fault of hers—everybody may see [why not the winker then?] that what upsets her temper is a pimple on the nose. Let us understand you, Mr. Pope. A pimple!—what, do you mean to say that pimples jump up on ladies' faces at the unfurling of a fan? If they really *did* so in the 12th of George II., and a lady, not having a pimple on leaving her dressing-room, might grow one whilst taking tea, then we think that a saint might be excused for storming a little. But how is it that the wretch who winks does *not* see the pimple, the *causa teterrima* of the sudden wrath; and Silia, who has no looking-glass at her girdle, *does?* And then who is it that Silia "storms" at—the company, or the pimple? If at the company, we cannot defend her; but if at the pimple—oh, by all means—storm and welcome—she can't say anything worse than it deserves. Wrong or right, however, what moral does Silia illustrate more profound than this—that a particular lady,

otherwise very amiable, falls into a passion upon suddenly finding her face disfigured? But then one remembers the song—"*My face is my fortune, sir, she said, sir, she said*" —it is a part of *every* woman's fortune, so long as she is young. Now to find one's fortune dilapidating by changes so rapid as this—pimples rising as suddenly as April clouds —is far too trying a calamity, that a little fretfulness should merit either reproach or sneer. Dr. Johnson's opinion was, that the man who cared little for dinner, could not be reasonably supposed to care much for anything. More truly it may be said, that the woman who is reckless about her face must be an unsafe person to trust with a secret. But seriously, what moral, what philosophic thought can be exemplified by a case so insipid, and so imperfectly explained as this?

Next comes the case of Narcissa :—

> "'Odious! in *woollen?** 'Twould a saint provoke,'
> Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.
> 'No, let a charming chintz and Brussels lace
> Wrap my cold limbs and shade my lifeless face;
> One would not sure be frightful when one's dead:
> And, Betty, give this cheek a little red.'"

Well, what's the matter now? What's amiss with Narcissa, that a satirist must be called in to hold an inquest upon the corpse, and take Betty's evidence against her mistress? Upon hearing any such question, Pope would have started up in the character (very unusual with *him*) of religious censor, and demanded whether one approved of a woman's fixing her last dying thought upon the attractions of a person so soon to dwell with darkness and worms? Was

* This refers to the Act of Parliament, then recent, for burying corpses in woollen, which greatly disturbed the fashionable costume in coffins *comme il faut.*

that right—to provide for coquetting in her coffin? Why no, not strictly right, its impropriety cannot be denied; but what strikes one even more is, the suspicion that it may be a lie. Be this as it may, there are two insurmountable objections to the case of Narcissa, even supposing it not fictitious—viz., first, that so far as it offends at all, it offends the religious sense, and not any sense of which satire takes charge; secondly, that without reference to the special functions of satire, *any* form of poetry whatever, or *any* mode of moral censure, concerns itself not at all with total anomalies. If the anecdote of Narcissa were other than a fiction, then it was a case too peculiar and idiosyncratic to furnish a poetic illustration; neither moral philosophy nor poetry condescends to the monstrous or the abnormal; both one and the other deal with the catholic and the representative.

There is another *Narcissa* amongst Pope's tulip-beds of ladies, who is even more open to criticism—because offering not so much an anomaly in one single trait of her character, as an utter anarchy in all. *Flavia* and *Philomedé* again present the same multitude of features with the same absence of all central principle for locking them into unity. They must have been distracting to themselves; and they are distracting to us a century later. *Philomedé*, by the way, represents the second Duchess of Marlborough,* daughter of the great Duke. And these names lead us

* The sons of the Duke having died in early youth, the title and estates were so settled as to descend through this daughter, who married the Earl of Sunderland. In consequence of this arrangement, *Spencer*, the name of Lord Sunderland, displaced, until lately, the great name of *Churchill;* and the Earl became that second Duke of Marlborough, about whom Smollett tells us in his History of England (Reign of George II.) so remarkable and to this hour so mysterious a story.

naturally to Sarah, the original, and (one may call her) the *historical* Duchess, who is libelled under the name of *Atossa.* This character amongst all Pope's satiric sketches has been celebrated the most, with the single exception of his *Atticus.* But the *Atticus* rested upon a different basis—it was true; and it was noble. Addison really *had* the infirmities of envious jealousy, of simulated friendship, and of treacherous collusion with his friend's enemies—which Pope imputed to him under the happy parisyllabic name of Atticus; and the mode of imputation, the tone of expostulation—indignant as regarded Pope's own injuries, but yet full of respect for Addison, and even of sorrowful tenderness; all this in combination with the interest attached to a feud between two men so illustrious, has sustained the *Atticus* as a classic remembrance in satiric literature. But the *Atossa* is a mere chaos of incompatibilities, thrown together as into some witch's cauldron. The witch, however, had sometimes an unaffected malignity, a sincerity of venom in her wrath, which acted chemically as a solvent for combining the hetorogeneous ingredients in her kettle; whereas the want of truth and earnestness in Pope leave the incongruities in his kettle of description to their natural incoherent operation on the reader. We have a great love for the great Duchess of Marlborough, though too young by a hundred years * or so to have been that true and faithful friend which, as contemporaries, we *might* have been.

What we love Sarah for, is partly that she has been ill used by all subsequent authors, one copying from another

* The Duchess died in the same year as Pope, viz., just in time by a few months to miss the Rebellion of 1745, and the second Pretender; spectacles which for little reasons (vindictive or otherwise) both of them would have enjoyed until the spring of 1746, when their hour of hope passed away for ever.

a fury against her which even in the first of these authors was not real. And a second thing which we love is her very violence, qualified as it was. Sulphureous vapours of wrath rose up in columns from the crater of her tempestuous nature against him that *deeply* offended her, but she neglected petty wrongs. Wait, however, let the volcanic lava have time to cool, and all returned to absolute repose. It has been said that she did not write her own book. We are of a different opinion. The mutilations of the book were from other and inferior hands : but the main texture of the narrative and of the comments were, and must have been, from herself, since there could have been no adequate motive for altering them, and nobody else could have had the same motive for uttering them. It is singular that in the case of the Duchess, as well as that of the lady M. W. Montagu, the same two men without concert, were the original aggressors amongst the *gens de plume*, viz., Pope, and subsequently, next in the succession to *him*, Horace Walpole. Pope suffered more from his own libellous assault upon *Atossa*, through a calumny against himself rebounding from it, than *Atossa* could have done from the point-blank shot of fifty such batteries. The calumny circulated was, that he had been bribed by the Duchess with a thousand pounds to suppress the character—which pocketing of a bribe of itself was bad enough ; but, as the consummation of baseness, it was added, that after all, in spite of the bribe, he caused it to be published. This calumny we believe to have been utterly without foundation. It is repelled by Pope's character, incapable of any act so vile, and by his position, needing no bribes. But what we wish to add is, that the calumny is equally repelled by Sarah's character, incapable of any propitiation so abject. Pope wanted no thousand pounds ; but neither did Sarah want his clemency.

He would have rejected the £1000 cheque with scorn; but *she* would have scorned to offer it. Pope cared little for Sarah; but Sarah cared nothing at all for Pope.

What *is* offensive, and truly so, to every generous reader, may be expressed in two items: first, not pretending to have been himself injured by the Duchess, Pope was in this instance meanly adopting some third person's malice, which sort of intrusion into other people's quarrels is a sycophantic act, even where it may not have rested upon a sycophantic motive; secondly, that even as a second-hand malice it is not sincere. More shocking than the malice is the self-imposture of the malice: in the very act of puffing out his cheeks like Æolus, with ebullient fury, and conceiting himself to be in a passion perfectly diabolic, Pope is really unmoved, or angry only by favour of dyspepsy; and at a word of kind flattery from Sarah (whom he was quite the man to love), though not at the clink of her thousand guineas, he would have fallen at her feet, and kissed her beautiful hand with rapture. To enter a house of hatred as a junior partner, and to take the stock of malice at a valuation—(we copy from advertisements)—*that* is an ignoble act. But then how much worse in the midst of all this unprovoked wrath, real as regards the persecution which it meditates, but false as the flatteries of a slave in relation to its pretended grounds, for the spectator to find its malice counterfeit, and the fury only a plagiarism from some personated fury in an opera.

There is no truth in Pope's satiric sketches of women—not even colourable truth; but if there were, how frivolous, how hollow, to erect into solemn monumental protestations against the whole female sex what, if examined, turn out to be pure casual eccentricities, or else personal idiosyncracies, or else foibles shockingly caricatured, but, above all,

to be such foibles as could not have connected themselves with *sincere* feelings of indignation in any rational mind.

The length and breadth [almost we might say—the *depth*] of the shallowness, which characterizes Pope's Philosophy, cannot be better reflected than from the four well-known lines—

> "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> *His* can't be wrong, whose life is in the right;
> For forms of government let fools contest,
> Whate'er is best administered is best."

In the first couplet, what Pope says is, that a life, which is irreproachable on a *human* scale of appreciation, neutralizes and practically cancels all possible errors of creed, opinion, or theory. But this schism between the moral life of man and his moral faith, which takes for granted that either may possibly be true, whilst the other is entirely false, can wear a moment's plausibility only by understanding *life* in so limited a sense as the sum of a man's external actions, appreciable by man. He whose life is in the right, cannot, says Pope, in any sense calling for blame, have a wrong faith; that is, if his life *were* right, his creed might be disregarded. But the answer is—that his life, according to any adequate idea of life in a moral creature, *cannot* be in the right unless in so far as it bends to the influences of a true faith. How feeble a conception must that man have of the infinity which lurks in a human spirit, who can persuade himself that its total capacities of life are exhaustible by the few gross *acts* incident to social relations or open to human valuation? An act, which may be necessarily limited and without opening for variety, may involve a large variety of motives—motives again, meaning grounds of action that are distinctly recognised for such, may (numerically speaking) amount to nothing at all when

compared with the absolutely infinite influxes of feeling or combinations of feeling that vary the thoughts of man; and the true internal *acts* of moral man are his thoughts—his yearnings—his aspirations—his sympathies—or repulsions of heart. This is the life of man as it is appreciable by heavenly eyes. The scale of an alphabet—how narrow is that! Four or six and twenty letters, and all is finished Syllables range through a wider compass. Words are yet more than syllables. But what are words to thoughts? Every word has a thought corresponding to it, so that not by so much as one solitary counter can the words outrun the thoughts. But every thought has *not* a word corresponding to it: so that the thoughts may outrun the words by many a thousand counters. In a developed nature they *do* so. But what are the thoughts when set against the modifications of thoughts by feelings, hidden even from him that feels them—or against the inter-combinations of such modifications with others—complex with complex, decomplex with decomplex—these can be unravelled by no human eye! This is the infinite music that God only can read upon the vast harp of the human heart. Some have fancied that musical combinations might in time be exhausted. A new Mozart might be impossible. All that he could do might already have been done. Music laughs at *that*, as the sea laughs at palsy, as the morning laughs at old age and wrinkles. But a harp, though a world in itself, is but a narrow world in comparison with the world of a human heart.

Now these thoughts, tinctured subtly with the perfume and colouring of human affections, make up the sum of what merits κατ' ἐξοχην the name of *life;* and these in a vast proportion depend for their possibilities of truth upon the degree of approach which the thinker makes to the

appropriation of a pure faith. A man is thinking all day long, and putting thoughts into words: he is acting comparatively seldom. But are any man's thoughts brought into conformity with the openings to truth that a faith like the Christian's faith suggests? Far from it. Probably there never was one thought, from the foundation of the earth, that has passed through the mind of man, which did not offer some blemish, some sorrowful shadow of pollution, when it came up for review before a heavenly tribunal; that is, supposing it a thought entangled at all with human interests or human passions. But it is the *key* in which the thoughts move that determines the stage of moral advancement. So long as we are human, many among the numerous and evanescent elements that enter (half-observed or not observed at all) into our thoughts, cannot *but* be tainted. But the governing, the predominant element it is which gives the character and tendency to the thought; and this must become such, must become a governing element, through the quality of the ideas deposited in the heart by the quality of the religious faith. One pointed illustration of this suggests itself from another poem of Pope's, in which he reiterates his shallow doctrine. In his Universal Prayer he informs us, that it can matter little whether we pray to Jehovah or to Jove, so long as in either case we pray to the First Cause. To contemplate God under that purely ontological relation to the world, would have little more operative value for what is most important in man than if he prayed to Gravitation. And it would have been more honest in Pope to say, as virtually he has said in the couplet under examination, that it can matter little whether man prays at all to any being. It deepens the scandal of this sentiment, coming from a poet professing Christianity, that a clergyman (holding preferment in the English Church),

viz., Dr. Joseph Warton, justifies Pope for this Pagan opinion, upon the ground that an ancient philosopher had uttered the same opinion long before. What sort of philosopher? A Christian? No: but a Pagan. What then is the value of the justification? To a Pagan it could be no blame that he should avow a reasonable Pagan doctrine. In Irish phrase, it was "true for *him.*" Amongst gods that were all utterly alienated from any scheme of moral government, all equally remote from the executive powers for sustaining such a government, so long as there was a practical anarchy and rivalship amongst themselves, there could be no sufficient reason for addressing vows to one rather than to another. The whole pantheon collectively could do nothing for moral influences; *à fortiori*, no separate individual amongst them. Pope indirectly confesses this elsewhere by his own impassioned expression of Christian feelings, though implicitly denying it here by his mere understanding. For he reverberates elsewhere, by deep echoes, that power in Christianity, which even in a legendary tale he durst not on mere principles of good sense and taste have ascribed to Paganism. For instance, how could a God, having no rebellion to complain of in man, pretend to any occasion of large forgiveness of man, or of framing means for reconciling this forgiveness with his own attribute of perfect holiness? What room, therefore, for ideals of mercy, tenderness, long-suffering, under any Pagan religion—under any worship of Jove? How again from gods, disfigured by fleshly voluptuousness in every mode, could any countenance be derived to an awful ideal of purity? Accordingly we find, that even among the Romans (the most advanced, as regards moral principle, of all heathen nations) neither the deep fountain of benignity, nor that of purity, was

unsealed in man's heart. So much of either was sanctioned as could fall within the purposes of the magistrate, but beyond that level neither fountain could have been permitted to throw up its column of water, nor could, in fact, have had any impulse to sustain it in ascending; and not merely because it would have been repressed by ridicule as a deliration of the human mind, but also because it would have been frowned upon gravely by the very principle of the Roman polity, as wandering away from *civic* objects. Even for so much of these great restorative ventilations as Rome enjoyed, she was indebted not to her religion, but to elder forces acting *in spite of* her religion, viz., the original law written upon the human heart. Now, on the other hand, Christianity has left a separate system of ideals amongst men, which (as regards their development) are continually growing in authority. Waters, after whatever course of wandering, rise to the level of their original springs. Christianity lying so far above all other fountains of religious influence, no wonder that its irrigations rise to altitudes otherwise unknown, and from which the distribution to every level of society becomes comparatively easy. Those men are reached oftentimes—choosing or not choosing—by the healing streams, who have not sought them nor even recognised them. Infidels of the most determined class talk in Christian lands the morals of Christianity, and exact that morality with their hearts, constantly mistaking it for a morality co-extensive with man; and why? Simply from having been moulded unawares by its universal pressure through infancy, childhood, manhood, in the nursery, in the school, in the market-place. Pope himself, not by system or by affectation an infidel, nor in any coherent sense a doubter, but a careless and indolent assenter to such doctrines of Christianity as his

own Church prominently put forward, or as social respectability seemed to enjoin,—Pope, therefore, so far a very lukewarm Christian, was yet unconsciously to himself searched profoundly by the Christian types of purity. This we may read in his

> "Hark, the herald angels say,
> Sister spirit, come away!"

Or, again, as some persons read the great lessons of spiritual ethics more pathetically in those that have transgressed them than in those that have been faithful to the end—read them in the Magdalen that fades away in penitential tears rather than in the virgin martyr triumphant on the scaffold—we may see in his own Eloisa, and in her fighting with the dread powers let loose upon her tempestuous soul, how profoundly Pope also had drunk from the streams of Christian sentiment through which a new fountain of truth had ripened a new vegetation upon earth. What was it that Eloisa fought with? What power afflicted her trembling nature, that any Pagan religions *could* have evoked? The human love "the nympholepsy of the fond despair," might have existed in a Vestal Virgin of ancient Rome: but in the Vestal what counter-influence could have come into conflict with the passion of love through any operation whatever of religion? None of any ennobling character that could reach the Vestal's own heart. The way in which religion connected itself with the case was through a traditional superstition—not built upon any fine spiritual sense of female chastity as dear to heaven—but upon a gross fear of alienating a tutelary goddess by offering an imperfect sacrifice. This sacrifice, the sacrifice of the natural household * charities in a few injured women on the altar of the

* The Vestals not only renounced marriage, at least for those

goddess, was selfish in all its stages—selfish in the dark deity that could be pleased by the sufferings of a human being simply *as* sufferings, and not at all under any fiction that they were voluntary ebullitions of religious devotion—selfish in the senate and people who demanded these sufferings as a ransom paid through sighs and tears for *their* ambition—selfish in the Vestal herself, as sustained altogether by fear of a punishment too terrific to face, sustained therefore by the meanest principle in her nature. But in Eloisa how grand is the collision between deep religious aspirations and the persecuting phantoms of her undying human passion! The Vestal feared to be walled up alive—abandoned to the pangs of hunger—to the trepidations of darkness—to the echoes of her own lingering groans—to the torments perhaps of frenzy rekindling at intervals the decaying agonies of flesh. Was *that* what Eloisa feared? Punishment she had none to apprehend: the crime was past, and remembered only by the criminals: there was none to accuse but herself: there was none to judge but God. Wherefore should Eloisa fear? Wherefore and with what should she fight? She fought by turns against herself and against God, against her human nature and against her spiritual yearnings. How grand were the mysteries of her faith, how gracious and forgiving its condescensions! How deep had been her human love, how imperishable its remembrance on earth! "What is it," the Roman Vestal would have said, "that this Christian lady is afraid of? What is the phantom that she seems to see?" Vestal! it is not fear, but grief. She sees an immeasurable heaven that seems to touch her eyes: so near is she to its love.

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years in which marriage could be a natural blessing, but also left their fathers' houses at an age the most trying to the human heart as regards the pangs of separation.

Suddenly, an Abelard—the glory of his race—appears, that seems to touch her lips. The heavens recede and diminish to a starry point twinkling in an unfathomable abyss; they are all but lost for *her*. Fire, it is in Eloisa that searches fire: the holy that fights with the earthly; fire that cleanses with fire that consumes: like cavalry the two fires wheel and counterwheel, advancing and retreating, charging and countercharging through and through each other. Eloisa trembles, but she trembles as a guilty creature before a tribunal unveiled within the secrecy of her own nature: there was no such trembling in the heathen worlds, for there was no such secret tribunal. Eloisa fights with a shadowy enemy: there was no such fighting for Roman Vestals: because all the temples of our earth (which is the crowned Vesta), no, nor all the glory of her altars, nor all the pomp of her cruelties, could cite from the depths of a human spirit any such fearful shadow as Christian faith evokes from an afflicted conscience.

Pope, therefore, wheresoever his heart speaks loudly, shows how deep had been his early impressions from Christianity. That is shown in his intimacy with Crashaw, in his Eloisa, in his Messiah, in his adaptation to Christian purposes of the Dying Adrian, &c. It is remarkable, also, that Pope betrays, in all places where he has occasion to *argue* about Christianity, how much grander and more faithful to that great theme were the subconscious perceptions of his heart than the explicit commentaries of his understanding. He, like so many others, was unable to read or interpret the testimonies of his own heart, an unfathomed deep over which diviner agencies brood than are legible to the intellect. The cipher written on his heaven-visited heart was deeper than his understanding could interpret.

If the question were asked. What ought to have been

the best among Pope's poems? most people would answer, the *Essay on Man*. If the question were asked, What *is* the worst? all people of judgment would say, the *Essay on Man*. Whilst yet in its rudiments, this poem claimed the first place by the promise of its subject; when finished, by the utter failure of its execution, it fell into the last. The case possesses a triple interest—first, as illustrating the character of Pope modified by his situation; secondly, as illustrating the true nature of that "didactic" poetry to which this particular poem is usually referred; thirdly, as illustrating the anomalous condition to which a poem so grand in its ambition has been reduced by the double disturbance of its proper movement; one disturbance through the position of Pope, another through his total misconception of didactic poetry. First, as regards Pope's position, it may seem odd—but it is not so—that a man's social position should overrule his intellect. The scriptural denunciation of riches, as a snare to any man that is striving to rise above worldly views, applies not at all less to the intellect, and to any man seeking to ascend by some aërial arch of flight above ordinary intellectual efforts. Riches are fatal to those continuities of energy without which there is no success of that magnitude. Pope had £800 a year. *That* seems not so much. No, certainly not, supposing a wife and six children: but by accident Pope had no wife and no children. He was luxuriously at his ease: and this accident of his position in life fell in with a constitutional infirmity that predisposed him to indolence. Even his religious faith, by shutting him out from those public employments which else his great friends would have been too happy to obtain for him, aided his idleness, or sometimes invested it with a false character of conscientious self-denial. He cherished his religion too certainly as a

plea for idleness. The result of all this was, that in his habits of thinking and of study (if *study* we can call a style of reading so desultory as *his*), Pope became a pure *dilettante;* in his intellectual eclecticism he was a mere epicure, toying with the delicacies and varieties of literature; revelling in the first bloom of moral speculations, but sated immediately; fastidiously retreating from all that threatened labour, or that exacted continuous attention; fathoming, throughout all his vagrancies amongst books, no foundation; filling up no chasms; and with all his fertility of thought expanding no germs of new life.

This career of luxurious indolence was the result of early luck which made it possible, and of bodily constitution which made it tempting. And when we remember his youthful introduction to the highest circles in the metropolis, where he never lost his footing, we cannot wonder that, without any sufficient motive for resistance, he should have sunk passively under his constitutional propensities, and should have fluttered amongst the flower-beds of literature or philosophy far more in the character of a libertine butterfly for casual enjoyment, than of a hard-working bee pursuing a premeditated purpose.

Such a character, strengthened by such a situation, would at any rate have disqualified Pope for composing a work severely philosophic, or where philosophy did more than throw a coloured light of pensiveness upon some sentimental subject. If it were necessary that the philosophy should enter substantially into the very texture of the poem, furnishing its interest and prescribing its movement, in that case Pope's combining and theorizing faculty would have shrunk as from the labour of building a pyramid. And wo to him where it did *not*, as really happened in the case of the Essay on Man For his

faculty of execution was under an absolute necessity of shrinking in horror from the enormous details of such an enterprise to which so rashly he had pledged himself. He was sure to find himself, as find himself he did, landed in the most dreadful embarrassment upon reviewing his own work. A work which, when finished, was not even begun; whose arches wanted their key-stones; whose parts had no coherency; and whose pillars, in the very moment of being thrown open to public view, were already crumbling into ruins. This utter prostration of Pope in a work so ambitious as an Essay on Man—a prostration predetermined from the first by the personal circumstances which we have noticed—was rendered still more irresistible, in the *second* place, by the general misconception in which Pope shared as to the very meaning of "didactic" poetry. Upon which point we pause to make an exposition of our own views.

What *is* didactic poetry? What does "didactic" mean when applied as a distinguishing epithet to such an idea as a poem? The predicate destroys the subject: it is a case of what logicians call *contradictio in adjecto*—the unsaying by means of an attribute the very thing which is the subject of that attribute you have just affirmed. No poetry can have the function of teaching. It is impossible that a variety of species should contradict the very purpose which contradistinguishes its *genus*. The several species differ partially; but not by the whole idea which differentiates their class. Poetry, or any one of the fine arts (all of which alike speak through the genial nature of man and his excited sensibilities), can teach only as nature teaches, as forests teach, as the sea teaches, as infancy teaches, viz., by deep impulse, by hieroglyphic suggestion. Their teaching is not direct or explicit, but lurking, implicit, masked in

deep incarnations. To teach formally and professedly, is to abandon the very differential character and principle of poetry. If poetry could condescend to teach anything, it would be truths moral or religious. But even these it can utter only through symbols and actions. The great moral, for instance, the last result of the Paradise Lost, is once formally announced, viz., *to justify the ways of God to man* ; but it teaches itself only by diffusing its lesson through the entire poem in the total succession of events and purposes : and even this succession teaches it only when the whole is gathered into unity by a reflex act of meditation ; just as the pulsation of the physical heart can exist only when all the parts in an animal system are locked into one organization.

To address the *insulated* understanding is to lay aside the Prospero's robe of poetry. The objection, therefore, to didactic poetry, as vulgarly understood, would be fatal even if there were none but this logical objection derived from its definition. To be in self-contradiction is, for any idea whatever, sufficiently to destroy itself. But it betrays a more obvious and practical contradiction when a little searched. If the true purpose of a man's writing a didactic poem were to teach, by what suggestion of idiocy should he choose to begin by putting on fetters? wherefore should the simple man volunteer to handcuff and manacle himself, were it only by the encumbrances of metre, and perhaps of rhyme? But these he will find the very least of his encumbrances. A far greater exists in the sheer necessity of omitting in any poem a vast variety of details, and even capital sections of the subject, unless they will bend to purposes of ornament. Now this collision between two purposes, the purpose of use in mere teaching, and the purpose of poetic delight, shows, by the uniformity of its solution, which of the two is the true purpose, and which the merely

ostensible purpose. Had the true purpose been instruction, the moment that this was found incompatible with a poetic treatment, as soon as it was seen that the sound education of the reader-pupil could not make way without loitering to gather poetic flowers, the stern cry of "duty" would oblige the poet to remember that he had dedicated himself to a didactic mission, and that he differed from other poets, as a monk from other men, by his vows of self-surrender to harsh ascetic functions. But, on the contrary, in the very teeth of this rule, wherever such a collision does really take place, and one or other of the supposed objects must give way, it is always the vulgar object of *teaching* (the pedagogue's object) which goes to the rear, whilst the higher object of poetic emotion moves on triumphantly. In reality not one didactic poet has ever yet attempted to use any parts or processes of the particular art which he made his theme, unless in so far as they seemed susceptible of poetic treatment, and only *because* they seemed so. Look at the poem of *Cyder*, by Philips, of the *Fleece* by Dyer, or (which is a still weightier example) at the *Georgics* of Virgil,—does any of these poets show the least anxiety for the correctness of your principles, or the delicacy of your manipulations in the worshipful arts they affect to teach? No; but they pursue these arts through every stage that offers any attractions of beauty. And in the very teeth of all anxiety for teaching, if there existed traditionally any very absurd way of doing a thing which happened to be eminently picturesque, and if, opposed to this, there were some improved mode that had recommended itself to poetic hatred by being dirty and ugly, the poet (if a good one) would pretend never to have heard of this disagreeable improvement. Or if obliged, by some rival poet, not absolutely to ignore it, he would allow that such a thing could

be done, but hint that it was hateful to the Muses or Graces, and very likely to breed a pestilence.

This subordination of the properly didactic function to the poetic, which leaves the old essential distinction of poetry [viz., its sympathy with the genial motions of man's heart] to override all accidents of special variation, and shows that the essence of poetry never *can* be set aside by its casual modifications,—will be compromised by some loose thinkers, under the idea that in didactic poetry the element of instruction is, in fact, one element, though subordinate and secondary. Not at all. What we are denying is, that the element of instruction enters *at all* into didactic poetry. The subject of the Georgics, for instance, is Rural Economy as practised by Italian farmers : but Virgil not only *omits* altogether innumerable points of instruction insisted on as articles of religious necessity by Varro, Cato, Columella, &c., but, even as to those instructions which he *does* communicate, he is careless whether they are made technically intelligible or not. He takes very little pains to keep you from capital mistakes in *practising* his instructions : but he takes good care that you shall not miss any strong impression for the eye or the heart to which the rural process, or rural scene, may naturally lead. He pretends to give you a lecture on farming, in order to have an excuse for carrying you all round the beautiful farm. He pretends to show you a good plan for a farm-house, as the readiest means of veiling his impertinence in showing you the farmer's wife and her rosy children. It is an excellent plea for getting a peep at the bonny milk-maids to propose an inspection of a model dairy. You pass through the poultry-yard, under whatever pretence, in reality to see the peacock and his harem. And so on to the very end, the pretended instruction is but in secret the connecting tie

which holds together the laughing flowers going off from it to the right and to the left; whilst if ever at intervals this prosy thread of pure didactics is brought forward more obtrusively, it is so by way of foil, to make more effective upon the eye the prodigality of the floral magnificence.

We affirm, therefore, that the didactic poet is so far from seeking even a secondary or remote object in the particular points of information which he may happen to communicate, that much rather he would prefer the having communicated none at all. We will explain ourselves by means of a little illustration from Pope, which will at the same time furnish us with a miniature type of what we ourselves mean by a didactic poem, both in reference to what it *is* and to what it is *not*. In the Rape of the Lock there is a game at cards played, and played with a brilliancy of effect and felicity of selection, applied to the circumstances, which make it a sort of gem within a gem. This game was not in the first edition of the poem, but was an after-thought of Pope's, laboured therefore with more than usual care. We regret that *ombre*, the game described, is no longer played, so that the entire skill with which the mimic battle is fought cannot be so fully appreciated as in Pope's days. The strategics have partly perished, which really Pope ought not to complain of, since he suffers only as Hannibal, Marius, Sertorius, suffered before him. Enough, however, survives of what will tell its own story. For what is it, let us ask, that a poet has to do in such a case, supposing that he were disposed to weave a didactic poem out of a pack of cards, as Vida has out of the chess-board? In describing any particular game he does not seek to *teach* you that game—he postulates it as *already* known to you—but he relies upon separate resources. 1st, He will revive in the reader's eye, for picturesque effect, the well-known

personal distinctions of the several kings, knaves, &c., their appearances and their powers. 2dly, He will choose some game in which he may display a happy selection applied to the chances and turns of fortune, to the manœuvres, to the situations of doubt, of brightening expectation, of sudden danger, of critical deliverance, or of final defeat. The interest of a war will be rehearsed—*lis est de paupere regno*—that is true; but the depth of the agitation on such occasions, whether at chess, at draughts, or at cards, is not measured of necessity by the grandeur of the stake; he selects, in short, whatever fascinates the eye or agitates the heart by mimicry of life; but so far from *teaching*, he presupposes the reader already *taught*, in order that he may go along with the movement of the descriptions.

Now, in treating a subject so vast as that which Pope chose for his Essay, viz., MAN, this eclecticism ceases to be possible. Every part depends upon every other part: in such a *nexus* of truths, to insulate is to annihilate. Severed from each other the parts lose their support, their coherence, their very meaning; you have no liberty to reject or choose. Besides, in treating the ordinary themes proper for what is called didactic poetry—say, for instance, that it were the art of rearing silk-worms or bees—or suppose it to be horticulture, landscape-gardening, hunting, or hawking, rarely does there occur anything polemic; or if a slight controversy *does* arise, it is easily hushed asleep—it is stated in a line, it is answered in a couplet. But in the themes of Lucretius and Pope *everything* is polemic—you move only through dispute, you prosper only by argument and never-ending controversy. There is not positively one capital proposition or doctrine about man, about his origin, his nature, his relations to God, or his prospects, but must be fought for with energy, watched at every turn with vigilance, and followed into

endless mazes, not under the choice of the writer, but under the inexorable dictation of the argument.

Such a poem, so unwieldy, whilst at the same time so austere in its philosophy, together with the innumerable polemic parts essential to its good faith and even to its evolution, would be absolutely unmanageable from excess and from disproportion, since often a secondary demur would occupy far more space than a principled section. Here lay the impracticable dilemma for Pope's Essay on Man. To satisfy the demands of the subject, was to defeat the objects of poetry. To evade the demands in the way that Pope has done, is to offer us a ruin for a palace. The very same dilemma existed for Lucretius, and with the very same result. The *De Rerum Naturâ* (which might, agreeably to its theme, have been entitled *De Omnibus Rebus*), and the Essay on Man (which might equally have borne the Lucretian title *De Rerum Naturâ*), are both, and from the same cause, fragments that could not have been completed. Both are accumulations of diamond-dust without principles of coherency. In a succession of pictures, such as usually form the materials of didactic poems, the slightest thread of interdependency is sufficient. But, in works essentially and everywhere argumentative and polemic, to omit the connecting links, as often as they are insusceptible of poetic effect, is to break up the unity of the parts, and to undermine the foundations, in what expressly offers itself as a systematic and architectural whole. Pope's poem has suffered even more than that of Lucretius from this want of cohesion. It is indeed the realization of anarchy; and one amusing test of this may be found in the fact, that different commentators have deduced from it the very opposite doctrines. In some instances this apparent antinomy is doubtful, and dependent on the ambiguities or

obscurities of the expression. But in others it is fairly deducible; and the cause lies in the elliptical structure of the work: the ellipsis, or (as sometimes it may be called) the chasm, may be filled up in two different modes essentially hostile: and he that supplies the *hiatus*, in effect determines the bias of the poem this way or that—to a religious or to a sceptical result. In this edition the commentary of Warburton has been retained, which ought certainly to have been dismissed. The essay is, in effect, a Hebrew word with the vowel-points omitted: and Warburton supplies one set of vowels, whilst Crousaz sometimes with equal right supplies a contradictory set.

As a whole, the edition before us is certainly the most agreeable of all that we possess. The fidelity of Mr. Roscoe to the interest of Pope's reputation, contrasts pleasingly with the harshness at times of Bowles, and the reckless neutrality of Warton. In the editor of a great classic, we view it as a virtue, wearing the grace of loyalty, that he should refuse to expose frailties or defects in a spirit of exultation. Mr. Roscoe's own notes are written with a peculiar good sense, temperance, and kind feeling. The only objection to them, which applies, however, still more to the notes of the former editors, is the want of compactness. They are not written under that austere instinct of compression and verbal parsimony, as the ideal merit in an annotator, which ought to govern all such ministerial labours in our days. Books are becoming too much the oppression of the intellect, and cannot endure any longer the accumulation of undigested commentaries, or that species of diffusion in editors which roots itself in laziness: the efforts of condensation and selection are painful; and they are luxuriously evaded by reprinting indiscriminately whole masses of notes—though often in substance reiterat-

ing each other. But the interests of readers clamorously call for the amendment of this system. The principle of selection must now be applied even to the *text* of great authors. It is no longer advisable to reprint the whole of either Dryden or Pope. Not that we would wish to see their works mutilated. Let such as are selected be printed in the fullest integrity of the text. But some have lost their interest;* others, by the elevation of public morals since the days of those great wits, are felt to be now utterly unfit for general reading. Equally for the reader's sake and the poet's, the time has arrived when they may be advantageously retrenched: for they are painfully at war with those feelings of entire and honourable esteem with which all lovers of exquisite intellectual brilliancy must wish to surround the name and memory of POPE.

* We do not include the DUNCIAD in this list. On the contrary, the arguments by which it has been generally undervalued, as though antiquated by lapse of time and by the fading of names, are all unsound. We ourselves hold it to be the greatest of Pope's efforts. But for that very reason we retire from the examination of it, which we had designed, as being wholly disproportioned to the narrow limits remaining to us.

THEORY OF GREEK TRAGEDY.

The Greek tragedy is a dark problem. We cannot say that the Greek drama, as a whole, is such in any more comprehensive sense; for the comedy of Greece depends essentially upon the same principles as our own. Comedy, as the reflex of social life, will shift in correspondence to the shifting movements of civilisation. Inevitably as human intercourse in cities grows more refined, comedy will grow more subtle; it will build itself on distinctions of character less grossly defined, and on features of manners more delicate and impalpable. But the *fundus*, the ultimate resource, the well-head of the comic, must for ever be sought in one and the same field—viz., the ludicrous of incident, or the ludicrous of situation, or the ludicrous which arises in a mixed way between the character and the situation. The age of Aristophanes, for example, answered in some respects to our own earliest dramatic era, viz., from 1588 to 1635, an age not (as Dr. Johnson assumes it to have been, in his elaborate preface to Shakspeare) rude or gross; on the contrary, far more intense with intellectual instincts and agencies than his own, which was an age of collapse But in the England of Shakspeare, as in the Athens of Aristophanes, the surface of society in cities still rocked, or at least undulated, with the ground-swell surviving from periods of intestine tumult and insecurity. The times were still martial and restless; men still wore swords in pacific

assemblies; the intellect of the age was a fermenting intellect; it was a revolutionary intellect. And comedy itself, coloured by the moving pageantries of life, was more sinewy, more audacious in its movements; spoke with something more of an impassioned tone; and was hung with draperies more rich, more voluminous, more picturesque. On the other hand, the age of the Athenian Menander, or the English Congreve, though still an unsettled age, was far less insecure in its condition of police, and far less showy in its exterior aspect. In England, it is true that a picturesque costume still prevailed; the whole people were still draped * professionally: each man's dress proclaimed his calling; and so far it might be said, "natio comœda est." But the characteristic and dividing spirit had fled, whilst the forms survived; and those middle men had universally arisen, whose equivocal relations to different employments broke down the strength of contrast between them. Comedy, therefore, was thrown more exclusively upon the interior man; upon the *nuances* of his nature, or upon the finer spirit of his manners. It was now the acknowledged duty of comedy to fathom the coynesses of human nature, and to arrest the fleeting phenomena of human demeanour.

But tragedy stood upon another footing. Whilst the comic muse in every age acknowledges a relationship which is more than sisterly—in fact, little short of absolute

* "*The whole people were still draped professionally.*"—For example, even in Queen Anne's reign, or so late as that of George I., physicians never appeared without the insignia of their calling, clergymen would have incurred the worst suspicions had they gone into the streets without a gown and bands Ladies, again, universally wore masks, as the sole substitute known to our ancestors for the modern parasol; a fact perhaps, not generally known.

identity—the tragic muse of Greece and England stand so far aloof as hardly to recognise each other under any common designation. Few people have ever studied the Grecian drama; and hence may be explained the possibility that so little should have been said by critics upon its characteristic differences, and nothing at all upon the philosophic ground of these differences. Hence may be explained the fact, that, whilst Greek tragedy has always been a problem in criticism, it is still a problem of which no man has attempted the solution. This problem it is our intention briefly to investigate.

I. There are cases occasionally occurring in the English drama and the Spanish, where a play is exhibited within a play. To go no further, every person remembers the remarkable instance of this in Hamlet. Sometimes the same thing takes place in painting. We see a chamber, suppose, exhibited by the artist, on the walls of which (as a customary piece of furniture), hangs a picture. And as this picture again might represent a room furnished with pictures, in the mere logical possibility of the case we might imagine this descent into a life below a life going on *ad infinitum.* Practically, however, the process is soon stopped. A retrocession of this nature is difficult to manage. The original picture is a mimic—an unreal life. But this unreal life is itself a real life with respect to the secondary picture; which again must be supposed realized with relation to the tertiary picture, if such a thing were attempted. Consequently, at every step of the *introvolution* (to neologise a little in a case justifying a neologism), something must be done to differentiate the gradations, and to express the subordinations of life; because each term in the descending series, being first of all a mode of non-reality to the spectator, is next to assume the functions of a real life in

its relations to the next lower or interior term of the series.

What the painter does in order to produce this peculiar modification of appearances, so that an object shall affect us first of all as an idealized or unreal thing, and next as itself a sort of relation to some secondary object still more intensely unreal, we shall not attempt to describe; for in some technical points we should, perhaps, fail to satisfy the reader: and without technical explanations we could not satisfy the question. But, as to the poet—all the depths of philosophy, at least of any known and recognised philosophy, would less avail to explain, speculatively, the principles which, in such a case, should guide him, than Shakspeare has explained by his practice. The problem before him was one of his own suggesting; the difficulty was of his own making. It was—so to differentiate a drama that it might stand within a drama, precisely as a painter places a picture within a picture; and therefore that the secondary or inner drama should be non-realized upon a scale that would throw, by comparison, a reflex colouring of reality upon the principal drama. This was the problem: this was the thing to be accomplished: and the secret, the law, of the process by which he accomplishes this, is—to swell, tumefy, stiffen, not the diction only, but the tenor of the thought; in fact, to stilt it, and to give it a prominence and an ambition beyond the scale which he adopted for his ordinary life. It is, of course, therefore, in rhyme—an artifice which Shakspeare employs with great effect on other similar occasions (that is, occasions when he wished to solemnize or in any way differentiate the life); it is condensed and massed as respects the flowing of the thoughts; it is rough and horrent with figures in strong relief, like the embossed gold of an ancient vase: and the movement of

the scene is contracted into short gyrations—so unlike the free sweep and expansion of his general developments.

Now, the Grecian tragedy stands in the very same circumstances, and rises from the same original basis. If, therefore, the reader can obtain a glimpse of the life within a life, which the painter sometimes exhibits to the eye, and which the Hamlet of Shakspeare exhibits to the mind—then he may apprehend the original phasis under which we contemplate the Greek tragedy.

II. But to press further into the centre of things, perhaps the very first element in the situation of the Grecian tragedy, which operated by degrees to evoke all the rest, was the original elevation of the scale by which all was to be measured, in consequence of two accidents—1st, the sanctity of the ceremonies in which tragedy arose; 2d, the vast size of the ancient theatres.

The first point we need not dwell on: everybody is aware that tragedy in Greece grew by gradual expansions out of an idolatrous rite—out of sacrificial pomp: though we do not find anybody who has noticed the consequent overruling effect which this had upon the quality of that tragedy: how, in fact, from this early cradle of tragedy, arose a sanctity which compelled all things to modulate into the same religious key. But next, the theatres—why were they so vast in ancient cities, in Athens, in Syracuse, in Capua, in Rome? Purely from democratic influences. Every citizen was entitled to a place at the public scenical representations. In Athens, for example, the state paid for him. He was present, by possibility and by legal fiction, at every performance: therefore, room must be prepared for him. And, allowing for the privileged foreigners (the domiciled aliens called μετοικοι), we are not surprised to hear that the Athenian theatre was adapted to an audience

of thirty thousand persons. It is not enough to say that *naturally*—we have a right to say that *inevitably*—out of this prodigious compass, exactly ten times over the compass of the *large* Drury Lane burned down a generation ago, arose certain immediate results that moulded the Greek tragedy in all its functions, purposes, and phenomena. The person must be aggrandized, the countenance must be idealized. For upon any stage corresponding in its scale to the colossal dimensions of such a house, the unassisted human figure would have been lost; the unexaggerated human features would have been seen as in a remote perspective, and besides, have had their expression lost; the unreverberated human voice would have been undistinguishable from the surrounding murmurs of the audience. Hence the cothurnus to raise the actor; hence the voluminous robes to hide the disproportion thus resulting to the figure; hence the mask larger than life, painted to represent the noble Grecian contour of countenance; hence the mechanism by which it was made to swell the intonations of the voice like the brazen tubes of an organ.

Here, then, you have a tragedy, by its very origin, in mere virtue of the accidents out of which it arose, standing upon the inspiration of religious feeling; pointing, like the spires of our English parish churches, up to heaven by mere necessity of its earliest purpose, from which it could not alter or swerve *per saltum;* so that an influence once there, was always there. Even from that cause, therefore, you have a tragedy ultra-human and Titanic. But next, from political causes falling in with that early religious cause, you have a tragedy forced into a more absolute and unalterable departure from a human standard. That figure so noble, that voice so profound, and, by the very construction of the theatres as well as of the masks, receiving such

solemn reverberations, proclaim a being elevated above the ordinary human scale. And then comes the countenance always adjusted to the same unvarying tone of sentiment, viz., the presiding sentiment of the situation, which of itself would go far to recover the key-note of Greek tragedy. These things being given, we begin to perceive a life removed by a great gulf from the ordinary human life even of kings and heroes: we descry a life within a life.

III. Here, therefore, is the first great landing-place, the first station, from which we can contemplate the Greek tragedy with advantage. It is, by comparison with the life of Shakspeare, what the inner life of the mimetic play in Hamlet is to the outer life of the Hamlet itself. It is a life below a life. That is—it is a life treated upon a scale so sensibly different from the proper life of the spectator, as to impress him profoundly with the feeling of its idealization. Shakspeare's tragic life is our own life exalted and selected: the Greek tragic life presupposed another life, the spectator's, thrown into relief before it. The tragedy was projected upon the eye from a vast profundity in the rear: and between this life and the spectator, however near its phantasmagoria might advance to him, was still an immeasurable gulf of shadows.

Hence, coming nearer still to the determinate nature and circumscription of the Greek tragedy, it was *not* in any sense a development—1. Of human character; or, 2. Of human passion. Either of these objects, attributed to tragedy, at once inoculates it with a life essentially on the common human standard. But that neither was so much as dreamed of in the Grecian tragedy, is evident from the mere mechanism and ordinary conduct of those dramas which survive; those especially which seem entitled to be viewed as fair models of the common standard. About 1000

to 1500 lines, of which one-fifth must be deducted for the business of the chorus, may be taken as the average extent of a Greek tragic drama. Five acts, of one hundred and sixty lines each, allow no sweep at all for the systole and diastole, the contraction and expansion, the knot and the *dénouement*, of a tragic interest, according to our modern meaning. The ebb and flow, the inspiration and expiration, cannot find room to play in such a narrow scene. Were the interest made to turn at all upon the evolution of character, or of passion modified by character, and both growing upon the reader through various aspects of dialogue, of soliloquy, and of multiplied action—it would seem a storm in a wash-hand basin. A passion which advanced and precipitated itself through such rapid harlequin changes, would at best impress us with the feeling proper to a hasty melodrame, or perhaps serious pantomime. It would read like the imperfect outline of a play; or, still worse, would seem framed to move through such changes as might raise an excuse for the dancing and the lyric music. But the very external phenomena, the apparatus and scenic decorations of the Greek tragedy, all point to other functions. Shakspeare—that is, English tragedy—postulates the intense life of flesh and blood, of animal sensibility, of man and woman—breathing, waking, stirring, palpitating with the pulses of hope and fear. In Greek tragedy, the very masks show the utter impossibility of these tempests or conflicts. Struggle there is none, internal or external: not like Hamlet's with his own constitutional inertia, and his gloomy irresolution of conscience; not like Macbeth's with his better feeling as a man, with his hospitality as a host. Medea, the most tragic figure in the Greek scene, passes through no flux and reflux of passion, through no convulsions of jealousy on the one hand, or maternal love on the

other. She is tossed to and fro by no hurricanes of wrath, wrenched by no pangs of anticipation. All this is supposed to have passed out of the spectator's presence. The dire conflict no more exhibits itself scenically and "*coram populo*," than the murder of her two innocent children. Were it possible that it should, how could the *mask* be justified? The apparatus of the stage would lose all decorum; and Grecian taste, or sense of the appropriate, which much outran the strength of Grecian creative power, would have been exposed to perpetual shocks.

IV. The truth is now becoming palpable: certain great *situations*—not passion in states of growth, of movement, of self-conflict—but fixed, unmoving *situations* were selected; these held on through the entire course of one or more acts. A lyric movement of the chorus, which closed the act, and gave notice that it was closed, sometimes changed this situation; but throughout the act it continued unchanged, like a statuesque attitude. The story of the tragedy was pretty nearly involved and told by implication in the *tableaux vivans* which presided through the several acts. The very slight dialogue which goes on, seems meant rather as an additional exposition of the interest—a commentary on the attitude originally assumed—than as any exhibition of passions growing and kindling under the eye of the spectator. The mask, with its monotonous expression, is not out of harmony with the scene; for the passion is essentially fixed throughout, not mantling and undulating with the breath of change, but frozen into marble life.

And all this is both explicable in itself, and peremptorily determined, by the sort of idealized life—life in a state of remotion, unrealized, and translated into a neutral world of high cloudy antiquity—which the tragedy of Athens demanded for its atmosphere.

Had the Greeks, in fact, framed to themselves the idea of a tumultuous passion—passion expressing itself by the agitations of fluctuating will, as any fit, or even possible subject for scenic treatment; in that case they must have resorted to real life, the more real the better. Or, again, had real life offered to their conceptions a just field for scenic exhibition; in that case they must have been thrown upon conflicts of tempestuous passion, the more tempestuous the better. But being, by the early religious character of tragedy, and by the colossal proportions of their theatres, imperiously driven to a life more awful and still—upon life as it existed in elder days, amongst men so far removed, that they had become invested with a patriarchal, or even an antediluvian mistiness of antiquity, and often into the rank of demi-gods—they felt it possible to present this mode of being in states of *suffering*, for suffering is enduring and indefinite; but never in states of *conflict*, for conflict is, by its nature, fugitive and evanescent. The tragedy of Greece is always held up as a thing long past—the tragedy of England as a thing now passing. We are invited by Sophocles or Euripides, as by some great necromancer, to see long-buried forms standing in solemn groups upon the stage—phantoms from Thebes or from Cyclopian cities. But Shakspeare is a Cornelius Agrippa, who shows us, in his magic glass, creatures yet breathing, and actually mixing in the great game of life upon some distant field, inaccessible to us without a magician's aid.

The Greek drama, therefore, by its very necessities proposing to itself only a few grand attitudes or situations, and brief dialogues, as the means of illuminating those situations, with scarcely anything of action, "actually occurring on the stage"—from these purposes derives its other peculiarities: in the elementary necessities lay the *fundus* of the rest.

V. The notion, for example, that murder, or violent death, was banished from the Greek stage, on the Parisian conceit of the shock which such bloody incidents would give to the taste, is perfectly erroneous. Not because it was sanguinary, but because it was action, had the Greeks an objection to such violences. No action of *any kind* proceeds legitimately on that stage. The persons of the drama are always in a reposing state, "so long as they are before the audience." And the very meaning of an *act* is, that in the intervals, the suspension of the acts, any possible time may elapse, and any possible action may go on.

VI. Hence, also, a most erroneous theory has arisen about Fate as brooding over the Greek tragic scene. This was a favourite notion of the two Schlegels. But it is evident that many Greek tragedies, both amongst those which survive, and amongst those, the title and subjects of which are recorded, did not, and could not, present any opening at all for this dark agency. Consequently it was not essential. And, even where it did intervene, the Schlegels seem to have misunderstood its purpose. A prophetic colouring, a colouring of ancient destiny, connected with a character or an event, has the effect of exalting and ennobling. But whatever tends towards this result, inevitably translates the persons and their situation from that condition of ordinary breathing life, which it was the constant effort of the Greek tragedy to escape; and therefore it was, that the Greek poet preferred the gloomy idea of Fate: not because it was essential, but because it was elevating. It is for this reason, and apparently for this reason only, that Cassandra is connected by Æschylus with Agamemnon. The Sphinx, indeed, was connected with the horrid tale of Œdipus in *every* version of the tale: but Cassandra was brought upon the stage out of no *certain* historic tradition, or proper rela-

tion to Agamemnon, but to confer the solemn and mysterious hoar of a dark prophetic wo upon the dreadful catastrophe. Fate was therefore used, not for its own direct moral value as a force upon the will, but for its derivative power of ennobling and darkening.

VII. Hence, too, that habit amongst the tragic poets of travelling back to regions of forgotten fable and dark legendary mythus. Antiquity availed powerfully for their purposes, because of necessity it abstracted all petty details of individuality and local notoriety; all that would have composed a *character*. It acted as twilight acts (which removes day's "mutable distinctions"), and reduced the historic person to that sublime state of monotonous gloom which suited the views of a poet who wanted only the *situation*, but would have repelled a poet who sought also for the complex features of a character. It is true that such remote and fabulous periods are visited at times, though not haunted, by the modern dramatist. Events are sought, even upon the French stage, from Gothic or from Moorish times. But in that case, the poet endeavours to improve and strengthen any traits of character that tradition may have preserved, or by a direct effort of power to create them altogether, where history presents a blank neutrality —whereas the Greek poet used simply that faint outline of character, in its gross distinctions of good and bad, which the situation itself implied. For example, the Creon of Thebes is pretty uniformly exhibited as tyrannical and cruel. But that was the mere result of his position as a rival originally for the throne, and still more as the executive minister of the popular vengeance against Polynices for having brought a tide of war against his mother land: in that representative character Creon is compelled to acts of cruelty against Antigone in her sublime exercise of

natural piety—both sisterly and filial: and this cruelty to her and to the miserable wreck, her father, making the very wrath of heaven an argument for further persecution, terminates in leaving him an object of hatred to the spectator. But after all, his conduct seems to have been purely official and ministerial. Nor, if the reader think otherwise, will he find any further emanation from Creon's individual will or heart than the mere blank expression of tyranny in a public cause: nothing, in short, of that complexity and interweaving of qualities, that interaction of moral and intellectual powers, which we moderns understand by a character. In short, all the rude outlines of character on the Greek stage were, in the first place, mere inheritances from tradition, and generally mere determinations from the situation: and in no instance did the qualities of a man's will, heart, or constitutional temperament, manifest themselves by and through a collision or strife amongst each other; which is our test of a dramatic character. And therefore it was that elder. or even fabulous ages, were used as the true natural field of the tragic poet; partly because antiquity ennobled; partly also because, by abstracting the individualities of a character, it left the historic figure in that neutral state which was most entirely passive to the moulding and determining power of the situation.

Two objections we foresee—1. That even Æschylus, the sublimest of the Greek tragedians, did *not* always go back to a high antiquity. He himself had fought in the Persian war; and yet he brings both Xerxes and his father Darius (by means of his apparition) upon the stage; though the very Marathon of the father was but ten years earlier than the Thermopylæ and Salamis of the son. But in this instance the scene is not properly Grecian: it is referred

by the mind to Susa, the capital of Persia, far eastward even of Babylon, and four months' march from Hellas. Remoteness of space in that case countervailed the proximity in point of time; though it may be doubted whether, without the benefit of the supernatural, it would, even in that case, have satisfied the Grecian taste. And it certainly would not, had the whole reference of the piece not been so intensely Athenian. For, when we talk of Grecian tragedy, we must remember that, after all, the Pagan tragedy was in any proper sense exclusively Athenian; and the tendency of the Grecian taste, in its general Grecian character, was in various instances modified or absolutely controlled by that special feature of its existence.

2. It will be urged as indicating this craving after antiquity to be no peculiar or distinguishing feature of the Greek stage, that we moderns also turn away sometimes with dislike from a modern subject. Thus, if it had no other fault, the Charles I. of Banks is coldly received by English readers, doubtless; but not because it is too modern. The objection to it is, that a parliamentary war is too intensely political; and political, moreover, in a way which doubly defeated its otherwise tragic power; first, because questions too *notorious* and too domineering of law and civil polity were then at issue; the very same which came to a final hearing and settlement in 1688-9. Our very form of government, at this day, is the result of the struggle then going on,—a fact which eclipses and dwarfs any separate or private interest of an individual prince, though otherwise and by his personal character, in the very highest degree, an object of tragic sympathy. Secondly, because the political interest afloat at that era (1649) was too complex and intricate; it wanted the sim-

plicity of a poetic interest. That is the objection to Charles I. as a tragedy! not because modern, but because too domineeringly political; and because the casuistic features of the situation were too many and too intricate.

VIII. Thus far, therefore, we now comprehend the purposes and true *locus* to the human imagination of the Grecian tragedy—that it was a most imposing scenic exhibition of a few grand situations: grand from their very simplicity, and from the consequences which awaited their *dénouement*; and seeking support to this grandeur from constantly fixing its eye upon elder ages lost in shades of antiquity; or, if departing from that ideal now and then, doing so with a view to patriotic objects, and seeking an occasional dispensation from the rigour of art in the popular indulgence to whatever touched the glory of Athens. Let the reader take, along with him, two other circumstances, and he will then complete the idea of this stately drama; first, the character of the *Dialogue*; secondly, the functions of the *Chorus*.

IX. From one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty lines of hexameter Iambic verse compose the dialogue of each act.* This space is sufficient for the purpose of

* The five acts, which old tradition prescribed as binding upon the Greek tragic drama, cannot always be marked off by the interruptions of the chorus. In the *Heracleidæ* of Euripides they can. But it is evident that these acts existed for the sake of the chorus, by way of allowing sufficient openings (both as to number and length) for the choral dances; and the necessity must have grown out of the time allowed for a dramatic representation, and originally, therefore, out of the mere accidental convenience prescribed by the social usages of Athens. The rule, therefore, was at any rate an arbitrary rule. Purely conventional it would have been, and local, had it even grown out of any Attic superstition (as we have sometimes thought it might) as to the number of the choral dances. But most probably it rested

unfolding the situation to the spectator; but, as a means of unfolding a character, would have been by much too limited. For such a purpose, again, as this last, numerous scenes, dialogues, or soliloquies, must have been requisite; whereas generally, upon the Greek stage, a single scene, one dialogue between two interlocutors, occupies the entire act. The object of this dialogue was, of course, to bring forward the prominent points of the situation, and to improve its interest as regarded—1. its grandeur; 2. its statuesque arrangement to the eye; or, 3. the burden of tragic consequences which it announced. With such purposes, so distinct from any which are pursued upon the modern stage, arose a corresponding distinction of the dialogue. Had the dialogue ministered to any purpose so *progressive* and so active as that of developing a character, with new incidents and changes of the speakers coming forward at every moment, as occasions for evoking the peculiarities of that character—in such a case the more it had resembled the movement, the fluctuations, the hurry of actual life and of real colloquial intercourse, the more it would have aided the views of the poet. But the purpose of the Greek dialogue was not progressive; essentially it was retrospective. For example, the *Heracleidæ* opens with as fine and

upon a sort of convention, which of all is the least entitled to respect or translation to foreign soils, viz., the mere local arrangement of meals and sleeping hours in Athens; which, having prescribed a limited space to the whole performance, afterwards left this space to be distributed between the recitation and the more popular parts, addressed to eye and ear, as the mob of Athens should insist. Horace, in saying roundly as a sort of *brutum fulmen*, "*Neu quinto brevior neu sit productior, acta Fabula*," delivers this capricious rule in the capricious manner which becomes it. The *stet pro ratione voluntas* comes forward equally in the substance of the precept and in the style of its delivery.

impressive a group as ever sculptor chiselled—a group of young children, princely daughters of a great hero, whose acts resound through all mythology: viz., of Hercules, of a Grecian cleanser and deliverer from monsters, once irresistible to quell the oppressor, but now dead, and himself the subject of outrage in the persons of his children. These youthful ladies, helpless from their sex, with their grandmother Alcmene, now aged and infirm, have arranged themselves as a marble group on the steps ascending to the altars of a local deity. They have but one guide, one champion—a brother-in-arms of the deceased Hercules, and his reverential friend; but this brave man also suffering, through years and martial toils, under the penalties of decaying strength. Such is the situation, such the inauguration of this solemn tragedy. The dialogue which follows between Iolaus, the faithful guardian of the ladies, and the local ruler of the land, takes up this inaugural picture—so pompous from blazing altars and cloudy incense—so religious from the known meaning of the conventional attitudes—so beautiful from the loveliness of the youthful suppliants rising tier above tier according to their ages, and the graduation of the altar steps—so moving in its picture of human calamity by the contrasting figure of the two grey-haired supporters—so complete and orbicular in its delineation of human frailty by the surmounting circumstances of its crest, the altar, the priestess, the temple, the serene Grecian sky—this impressive picture, having of itself appealed to every one of thirty thousand hearts, having already challenged universal attention, is now explained and unfolded through the entire first act. Iolaus, the noble old warrior, who had clung the closer to the fluttering dovecot of his buried friend from the unmerited persecution which had assaulted them, comments to the stranger prince upon

the spectacle before him—a spectacle significant to Grecian eyes, intelligible at once to everybody; but still rare and witnessed in practice by nobody. The prince, Demophoon, is a ruler of Athens: the scene is placed in the Attic territory, but not in Athens; about fifteen miles, in fact, from that city, and not far from the dread field of future Marathon. To the prince, Iolaus explains the lost condition of his young flock. The ruler of Argos had driven them out of every asylum in the Peloponnesus. From city to city he had followed them at the heels, with his cruel heralds of persecution. They were a party of unhappy fugitives (most of them proclaiming their innocence by their very age and helplessness) that had run the circle of Greek hospitality: everywhere had been hunted out like wild beasts, or, like those common nuisances from which their illustrious father had liberated the earth: that the long circuit of their unhappy wanderings had brought them at last to Athens, in which city they had a final confidence as knowing not only the justice of that state, but that she only would not be moved from her purposes by fear of the aggressor. No finer opening can be imagined. The statuesque beauty of the group, and the unparalleled persecution which the first act exposes (a sort of misery and an absolute hostility of the human race to which our experience suggests no corresponding case, except that of a leper in the middle ages, or of a Pariah, or of a man under a papal interdict), fix the attention of the spectators beyond any other situation in Grecian tragedy. And the compliment to Athens, not verbal but involved in the very situation, gave a depth of interest to this drama, for the very tutelary region of the drama; which ought to stamp it with a sort of prerogative as in some respects the ideal tragedy or model of the Greek theatre.

Now, this one dialogue, as filling one act of a particular drama, is quite sufficient to explain the view we take of the Greek tragic dialogue. *It is altogether retrospective.* It takes for its theme the visible group arranged on the stage before the spectators from the first. Looking back to this, the two interlocutors (supposed to come forward upon the stage) contrive between them, one by pertinent questions, the other by judicious management of his replies, to bring out those circumstances in the past fortunes and immediate circumstances of this interesting family, which may put the audience in possession of all which it is important for them to know. The reader sees the dark legendary character which invests the whole tale; and in the following acts this darkness is made more emphatic from the fact that incidents are used, of which contradictory versions existed, some poets adopting one version, some another: so cloudy and uncertain were the facts. All this apocryphal gloom aids that sanctity and awe which belong to another and a higher mode of life; to that slumbering life of sculpture, as opposed to painting, which we have called a life within a life. Grecian taste would inevitably require that the dialogue should be adjusted to this starting-point and standard. Accordingly, in the first place, the dialogue is always (and in a degree perhaps unperceived by the translators up to this time) severe, massy, simple, yet solemnized intentionally by the use of a select vocabulary, corresponding (in point of archaism and remoteness from ordinary use) to our own scriptural vocabulary! Secondly, the metre is of a kind not yet examined with suitable care. There were two objects aimed at in the Greek Iambic of the tragic drama; and in some measure these objects were in collision with each other, unless most artfully managed. One was to exhibit a purified imitation of real human conversation.

The other was to impress upon this colloquial form, thus far by its very nature recalling ordinary human life, a character of solemnity and religious consecration. Partly this was effected by acts of omission and commission; by banishing certain words or forms of words; by recalling others of high antiquity: particular tenses, for instance, were never used by the tragic poets; not even by Euripides, (the most Wordsworthian* of the Athenian poets in the circumstance of having a peculiar theory of poetic diction, which lowered its tone of separation, and took it down from the cothurnus): other verbal forms, again, were used nowhere but upon the stage. Partly, therefore, this consecration of the tragic style was effected by the antique cast, and the exclusive cast of its phraseology. But, partly also, it was effected by the metre. From whatever cause it may arise—chiefly, perhaps, from differences in the genius of the two languages—certain it is that the Latin Iambics of

* Valckenaer, in his immortal series of comments on the *Phœnissæ* of Euripides, notices the peculiar spirit and tendency of the innovations introduced into the tragic diction by this youngest of the great Athenian dramatists. These innovations ran in the very same direction as those of Wordsworth in our own times; to say this, however, without further explanation, considering how profoundly the views of Wordsworth in this matter have been misunderstood, would simply be—to mislead the English reader equally as to Euripides. Yet, as we should be sorry to discuss so great a theme indirectly and in a corner, it may be enough for the present to remark—that Euripides did not mean to tax his great predecessors Æschylus and Sophocles with any error of taste in the cast of their diction. Having *their* purposes, they chose wisely. But he felt that the Athenian tragedy had two functions—1. to impress awe, and religious terror; 2. to impress pity. This last he adopted as his own peculiar function; and with it a corresponding diction—less grand (it is true) and stately, but counterbalancing this loss by a far greater power of pure (sometimes we may say, of holy) household pathos. Such also was the change wrought by Wordsworth.

Seneca, &c. (in the tragedies ascribed to him), cannot be so read by an English mouth as to produce anything like the sonorous rhythmus, and the grand intonation of the Greek Iambics. This is a curious fact, and as yet, we believe, unnoticed. But, over and above this original adaptation of the Greek language to the Iambic metre, we have no doubt whatever that the recitation of verse on the Attic stage was of an artificial and semi-musical character. It was undoubtedly much more *sustained* and intonated with a slow and measured stateliness,* which, whilst harmonizing it with the other circumstances of solemnity in Greek tragedy, would bring it nearer to music. Beyond a doubt, it had the effect (and might have the effect even now, managed by a good reader) of the *recitative* in the Italian opera: as, indeed, in other points, the Italian opera is a much nearer representative of the Greek tragedy than the direct modern tragedy—professing that title.

X. As to the Chorus, little needs to be said upon this element of the Athenian tragedy. Everybody knows how solemn, and therefore how solemnizing, must have been the richest and most lyrical music, the most passionate of the ancient poetry, the most dithyrambic of tragic and religious raptures, supported to the eye by the most hieroglyphic and therefore mysterious of dances. For the dances of the

* Any man, who has at all studied the Greek Iambics, must well remember those forms of the metre which are used in a cadence at the close of a resounding passage, meant to express a full pause, and the prodigious difference from such as were meant for weaker lines, or less impressive metrical effects. These cadences, with their full body of rhythmus, are never reproduced in the Latin imitations of the Iambic hexameter: nor does it seem within the compass of Latin Iambic metre to reach such effects: though otherwise, and especially in the Dactylic hexameter the Latin Language is more powerful than the Greek.

chorus—the strophe and the antistrophe—were symbolic, and therefore full of mysterious meanings; and not the less impressive, because these meanings and these symbols had lost their significancy to the mob; since the very cause of that loss lay in the antiquity of their origin. One great error which remains to be removed is the notion that the chorus either did support, or was meant to support, the office of a moral teacher. The chorus simply stood on the level of a sympathizing spectator, detached from the business and the crash of the catastrophe; and its office was to guide or to interpret the sympathies of the audience. Here, perhaps, was a great error of Milton's: which will be found in two* separate places. At present, it is sufficient to say, that the mysterious solemnity conferred by the chorus, presupposes, and is in perfect harmony with, our theory of a life within a life—a life sequestrated into some far-off slumbering state, having the severe tranquillity of Hades—a life symbolized by the marble life of sculpture; but utterly out of all symmetry and proportion to the realities of that human life which we moderns take up as the basis of our tragic drama.

* Viz., in the brief Introduction to the *Samson Agonistes*, and in a remarkable passage (taxed not unreasonably with bigotry by Wordsworth) of the *Paradise Regained.*

LANGUAGE.

No language is stationary, except in rude and early periods of society. The languages of nations like the English and French, walking in the van of civilisation, having popular institutions, and taking part in the business of the earth with morbid energy, are placed under the action of causes that will not allow them any respite from change. Neologism, in revolutionary times, is not an infirmity of caprice, seeking (to use the proverb of Cervantes) "for better bread than is made of wheat," but is a mere necessity of the unresting intellect. New ideas, new aspects of old ideas, new relations of objects to each other, or to man—the subject who contemplates those objects—absolutely insist on new words. And it would not be a more idle misconception to find a disease in the pains of growth, than to fancy a decay of vernacular purity in the multitude of verbal coinages which modern necessities of thought and action are annually calling forth on the banks of the Thames and the Seine.

Such coinages, however, do not all stand upon the same basis of justification. Some are regularly formed from known roots upon known analogies; others are formed licentiously. Some again meet a real and clamorous necessity of the intellect; others are fitted to gratify the

mere appetite for innovation. They take their rise in various sources, and are moulded with various degrees of skill. Let us throw a hasty glance on the leading classes of these coinages, and of the laws which appear to govern them, or of the anomalies with which they are sometimes associated. There are also large cases of innovation, in which no process of coinage whatever is manifested, but perhaps a simple restoration of old words, long since obsolete in literature and good society, yet surviving to this hour in provincial usage ; or, again, an extension and emancipation of terms heretofore narrowly restricted to a technical or a professional use—as we see exemplified in the word *ignore*, which, until very lately, was so sacred to the sole use of grand juries, that a man would have been obscurely suspected by a policeman, and would, indeed, have suspected himself, of something like petty larceny in forcing it into any general and philosophic meaning, which, however, it has now assumed, with little offence to good taste, and with *yeoman* service to the intellect. Other cases, again, there are, and at present far too abundant, in which the necessities of social intercourse, and not unfrequently the necessities of philosophic speculation, are provisionally supplied by *slang*, and the phraseology that is born and bred in the streets. The market-place and the highway, the *forum* and the *trivium*, are rich seed-plots for the sowing and the reaping of many indispensable ideas. That a phrase belongs to the slang dictionary is certainly no absolute recommendation ; sometimes such a phrase may be simply disgusting from its vulgarity, without adding anything to the meaning or to the rhetorical force. How shocking to hear an official dignitary saying (as but yesterday *was* heard), "What *on earth* could the clause mean ?" Yet neither is it any safe ground of absolute excommuni-

cation even from the sanctities of literature, that a phrase is entirely a growth of the street. The word *humbug*, for instance, rests upon a rich and comprehensive basis: it cannot be rendered adequately, either by German or by Greek, the two richest of human languages; and without this expressive word, we should all be disarmed for one great case, continually recurrent, of social enormity. A vast mass of villany, that cannot otherwise be reached by legal penalties, or brought within the rhetoric of scorn, would go at large with absolute impunity, were it not through the stern Rhadamanthian aid of this virtuous and inexorable word.

Meantime, as it would not suit the purposes of a sketch to be too systematic in the treatment of a subject so inexhaustible as language and style, neither would it be within the limits of just proportion that I should be too elaborate in rehearsing beforehand the several avenues and classes of cases through which an opening is made for new words amongst ourselves or the French. I will select such cases for separate notice as seem most interesting or most seasonable. But previously, as a proper mode of awakening the reader into giving relief and just prominence to the subject, I will point attention to the varying scale of appreciation applied to the diction and the national language, as a ground of national distinction and honour, by the five great intellectual nations of ancient and modern history, viz., the Greeks, the Romans, the French, the English, and the Germans. In no country, except one, is such a preface more requisite than in England, where it is strange enough that, whilst the finest models of style exist, and sub-consciously operate effectively as sources of delight, the *conscious* valuation of style is least perfectly developed.

Every nation has reason to feel interested in the pre-

tensions of its own native language; in the original quality of that language or characteristic *kind* of its powers; and in the particular *degree* of its expansions at the period in question. Even semi-barbarous tribes sometimes talk grandiloquently on this head, and ascribe to uncultivated jargons a fertility or a range of expressiveness quite incompatible with the particular stage of social development which the national capacities have reached. Not only in spite of its barbarism, but oftentimes in mere virtue of its barbarism, we find a language claiming, by its eulogists, to possess more than ordinary powers of picturesque expression. Such a claim is continually put forward on behalf of the Celtic languages, as, for instance, the Armoric, the Welsh, the Irish, the Manx, the Gaelic. Such a claim is put forward also for many oriental languages. Yet, in most of these cases, there is a profound mistake committed; and generally the same mistake. Without being strictly barbarous, all these languages are uncultured and rude in a degree corresponding to the narrow social development of the races who speak them. These races are precisely in that state of imperfect expansion, both civilly and intellectually, under which the separation has not fully taken place between poetry and prose. Their social condition is too simple and elementary to require much cultivation of intellectual topics. Little motive exists for writing, unless on occasions of poetic excitement. The subdued colouring, therefore, of prose has not yet been (to speak physiologically) secreted. And the national diction has the appearance of being more energetic and sparkling, simply because it is more inflated; the chastities of good taste not having yet been called forth by social necessities to disentangle the separate forms of impassioned and non-impassioned composition. The Kalmuck Tartars, according to a German

traveller, viz., Bergmann, long resident amongst them, speak in rapturous terms of their own language; but it is probable that the particular modes of phraseology which fascinate their admiration, are precisely those which a more advanced civilisation, and a corresponding development of taste, would reject as spurious. Certainly, in the case of a language and a literature likely to be much in advance of the Kalmuck, viz., the Arabic, at the era of Mahomet, we find this conjecture realized. The Koran is held by the devout Mahommedan to be the most admirable model of composition; but exactly those ornaments of diction or of imagery, which he regards as the jewels of the whole, are most entirely in the childish taste of imperfect civilisation. That which attracts the Arab critic or the Persian, is most of all repulsive to the masculine judgment of the European.

Barbarism, in short, through all degrees, generates its own barbarisque standards of taste; and nowhere so much as in the great field of diction and ornamental composition. A high civilisation is an indispensable condition for developing the full powers of a language; and it is equally a condition for developing the taste which must preside over the appreciation of diction and style. The elder civilisations of Egypt and of Asiatic empires are too imperfectly known at this day to furnish any suggestions upon the subject. The earliest civilisation that offers a practical field of study to our own age is the superb one of Greece.

It cannot be necessary to say that from that memorable centre of intellectual activity have emanated the great models in art and literature, which, to Christendom, when recasting her mediæval forms, became chiefly operative in controlling her luxuriance, and in other negative services, though not so powerful for positive impulse and inspiration.

Greece was, in fact, *too* ebullient with intellectual activity—an activity too palestric, and purely human—so that the opposite pole of the mind, which points to the mysterious and the spiritual, was, in the agile Greek, too intensely a child of the earth, starved and palsied; whilst in the Hebrew, dull and inert intellectually, but in his spiritual organs awake and sublime, the case was precisely reversed. Yet, after all, the result was immeasurably in favour of the Hebrew. Speaking in the deep sincerities of the solitary and musing heart, which refuses to be duped by the whistling of names, we must say of the Greek that—*laudatur et alget*—he has won the admiration of the human race, he is numbered amongst the chief brilliancies of earth, but on the deeper and more abiding nature of man he has no hold. He will perish when any deluge of calamity overtakes the libraries of our planet, or if any great revolution of thought remoulds them, and will be remembered only as a generation of flowers is remembered; with the same tenderness of feeling, and with the same pathetic sense of a natural predestination to evanescence. Whereas the Hebrew, by introducing himself to the secret places of the human heart, and sitting there as incubator over the awful germs of the spiritualities that connect man with the unseen worlds, has perpetuated himself as a power in the human system: he is co-enduring with man's race, and careless of all revolutions in literature or in the composition of society. The very languages of these two races repeat the same expression of their intellectual differences, and of the differences in their missions. The Hebrew, meagre and sterile as regards the numerical wealth of its ideas, is infinite as regards their power; the Greek, on the other hand, rich as tropic forests, in the polymorphous life, the life of the dividing and distinguishing intellect, is weak only in the supreme region of thought.

The Hebrew has scarcely any individuated words. Ask a Hebrew scholar if he has a word for a *ball* (as a tennis ball, *pila lusoria*); he says, "O yes." What is it then? Why, he gives you the word for *globe*. Ask for *orb*, for *sphere*, &c., still you have the same answer; the individual circumstantiations are swallowed up in the generic outline. But the Greek has a parity of wealth alike in the abstract and the concrete. Even as *vocal* languages, the Hebrew and the Greek obey the same prevailing law of difference. The Hebrew is a sublime monochord, uttering vague vowel sounds as indistinct and shy as the breathings of an Æolian harp when exposed to a fitful breeze. The Greek is more firmly articulated by consonants, and the succession of its syllables runs through a more extensive compass of sonorous variety than can be matched in any other known language. The Spanish and the Italian, with all the stateliness of their modulation, make no approach to the canorous *variety* of the sounds of the Greek.* Read a passage from almost any Greek poet, and each syllable seems to have been placed in its present position as a relief, and by way of contrast to the syllable which follows and precedes.

* The Romans discover something apparently of the same tendency to a vague economy of abstraction. But in *them* it is merely casual, and dependent on accidental ignorance. Thus, for instance, it is ridiculous to render the Catullian *Passer meæ puellæ* by *sparrow*. As well suppose Lesbia to have fondled a pet hedgehog. *Passer*, or *passerculus*, means *any* little bird whatever. The sternness of the Roman mind disdained to linger upon petty distinctions; or at least until the ages of luxurious refinement had paved the way for intellectual refinements. So again, *malum*, or even *pomum*, does not mean an apple, but any whatever of the larger spherical or spheroidical fruits. A peach, indeed, was described differentially, as *malum Persicum;* an apricot, had the Romans known it, would have been rendered by *malum apricum*, or *malum apricatum;* but an apple also, had it been mentioned with any stress of opposition or pointed distinction attached

Of a language thus and otherwise so divinely endowed, the Greeks had a natural right to be proud. Yet *were* they so? There is no appearance of it: and the reason, no doubt, lay in their insulated position. Having no *intellectual* intercourse with foreign nations, they had virtually no intercourse at all—none which could affect the feelings of the literary class, or generally of those who would be likely to contemplate language as a subject of æsthetic admiration. Each Hellenic author might be compared with others of his compatriot authors, in respect to his management of their common language; but not the language itself compared as to structure or capacities with other languages; since these other languages (one and all) were in any practical sense hardly assumed to exist. In this there was no arrogance. Aliens, as to country and civil polity, being objects of jealousy in the circumstances of Greece, there could be no reason for abstaining from any designation, however hostile, which might seem appropriate to the relation between the parties. But, in reality, the term *barbarians** seems, for many ages, to have implied nothing either hostile or disrespectful. By a natural *onomatopœia*, the Greeks used the iterated syllables *barbar* to denote that a man was unintelligible in his talk; and, by the word *barbarian* originally, it is probable that no sort of reproach was intended, but simply the fact that the people so called spoke a language not intelligible to Greeks. Latterly, the term seems to have been often used as one of mere convenience for classification, indicating the *non-*

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to it. would have been described differentially, as *malum vulgare*, or *malum domesticum*.

* There is a short. note by Gibbon upon this word; but it adds nothing to the suggestions which every thoughtful person will furnish to himself.

Hellenes in opposition to the *Hellenes;* and it was not meant to express any qualities whatever of the aliens—simply they were described as *being* aliens. But in the earliest times it was meant, by the word *barbarians*, to describe them under the idea of men who were ἑτερογλωττοι, men who, speaking in a tongue different from the Grecian, spoke unintelligibly; and at this day it is not impossible that the Chinese mean nothing more by the seemingly offensive term *outside barbarians.* The mis-translations must be many between ourselves and the Chinese; and the probability is, that this reputedly arrogant expression means only "the aliens, or external people, who speak in tongues foreign to China." Arrogant or not arrogant, however, in the mouth of the Greeks, the word *barbarians* included the whole human race not living in Hellas, or in colonies thrown off from Hellas.* Having no temptation or facilities for holding any intellectual intercourse with those who could not communicate through the channel of the Greek language, it followed that the Greeks had no means or opportunity for comparing their own language with the languages of other nations; and, together with

* In the later periods of Greek literature, viz., at and after the era of Pericles, when the attention had been long pointed to language, and a more fastidious apprehension had been directed to its slighter shades of difference, the term "*barbarous*" was applied apparently to uncouth dialects of the Greek language itself. Thus, in the Ajax of Sophocles, Teucer (though certainly talking Greek) is described as speaking barbarously. Perhaps, however, the expression might bear a different construction. But in elder periods it seems hardly possible that the term *barbarous* could ever have been so used. Sir Edward B. Lytton, in his "Athens," supposes Homer, when describing the Carians by this term, to have meant no more than that they spoke some provincial variety of the Ionic Greek: but, applied to an age of so little refinement as the Homeric, I should scarcely think this interpretation admissible.

this power of mutual comparison, fell away the call and excitement to vanity upon that particular subject. Greece was in the absolute insulation of the phœnix, the unique of birds, that dies without having felt a throb of exultation or a pang of jealousy, because it has exposed its gorgeous plumage and the mysterious solemnities of its beauty only to the dusky recesses of Thebaic deserts.

Not thus were the Romans situated. The Greeks, so profound and immovable was their self-conceit, never in any generation came to regard the Romans with the slightest tremour of jealousy, as though they were or ever could be rivals in literature. The Roman nobles, as all Greece knew, resorted in youth to Athens as to the eternal well-head of learning and eloquence; and the literary or the forensic efforts of such persons were never viewed as by possibility efforts of competition with their masters, but simply as graceful expressions of homage to the inimitable by men whose rank gave a value to this homage. Cicero and other Romans of his day were egregiously duped by their own vanity, when they received as sincere the sycophantic praises of mercenary Greek rhetoricians. No Greek ever in good faith admired a Roman upon intellectual grounds, except indeed as Polybius did, whose admiration was fixed upon the Roman institutions, not upon their literature: though even in *his* day the Roman literature had already put forth a masculine promise, and in Plautus, at least, a promise of *unborrowed* excellence. The Greeks were wrong: the Romans had some things in their literature which a Greek could neither have rivalled nor even understood. They had a peculiar rhetoric for example, such as Ovid's in the contest for the arms of Achilles—such as Seneca's, which, to this hour, has never been properly examined, and which not only has no parallel in

Grecian literature, but which, strangely enough, loses its whole effect and sense when translated into Greek: so entirely is it Roman by incommunicable privilege of genius.

But, if the Greeks did no justice to their Roman pupils, on the other hand, the Roman pupils never ceased to regard the Greeks with veneration, or to acknowledge them for their masters in literature: *they* had a foreign literature before their eyes challenging continual comparison; and this foreign literature was in a language which also challenged comparison with their own. Every Roman of distinction, after Sylla and Marius, understood Greek; often talked it fluently, declaimed in it, and wrote books in it. But there is no language without its own peculiar genius, and therefore none without its separate powers and advantages. That the Latin language has in excess such an original character, and consequently such separate powers, Romans were not slow to discover. Studying the Greek so closely they found by continual collation in what quarter lay the peculiar strength of the Latin. And, amongst others, Cicero did himself the greatest honour, and almost redeems the baseness of his political conduct, by the patriotic fervour which he now and then exhibits in defending the claims of his native language and native literature. He maintains, also, more than once, and perhaps with good reason, the native superiority of the Roman mind to the Grecian in certain qualities of racy humour, &c.*

* Where, by the way, the vocabulary of æsthetic terms, after all the labours of Ernesti and other German editors, is still far from being understood. In particular, the word *facetus* is so far from answering to its usual interpretation, that *nostro periculo* let the reader understand it as precisely what the French mean by *naïve*.

Here, viz., in the case of Cicero, we have the first eminent example (though he himself records some elder examples amongst his own countrymen) of a man's standing up manfully to support the pretensions of his mother tongue. And this might be done in a mere spirit of pugnacious defiance to the arrogance of another nation—a spirit which finds matter of quarrel in a straw. But here also we find the first example of a statesman's seriously regarding a language in the light of a foremost jewel amongst the trophies of nationality.

Coming forward to our own times, we find sovereign rulers, on behalf of great nations, occasionally raising disputes which presume some weak sense of the value and dignity attached to a language. Cromwell, for instance, insisted upon Cardinal Mazarine's surrendering his pretension to have the French language used in a particular negotiation; and accordingly Latin was substituted. But this did not argue in Cromwell any *real* estimation of the English language. He had been weak enough to wish that his own life and annals should be written in Latin rather than in English. The motive, it is true, might be to facilitate the circulation of the work amongst the literati of the Continent. But vernacular translations would more certainly have been executed all over the Continent in the absence of a Latin original; for this, by meeting the demand of foreigners in part (viz., of *learned* foreigners), would *pro tanto* have lessened the motives to such translations. And apart from this preference of a Latin to a domestic portraiture addressing itself originally to his own countrymen, or, if Latin were otherwise the preferable language, apart from Cromwell's preference of a Latin Casaubon to a Latin Milton, in no instance did Cromwell testify any sense of the commanding rank due to English literature amongst the

contemporary * literatures of Christendom, nor any concern for its extension.

In the case of resisting the French arrogance, Cromwell had seemed to express homage to the language of his country, but in reality he had only regarded the political dignity of his country. A pretension may be lighter than a feather; and yet in behalf of our country we do right to suffer no insolent aggression upon it by an enemy. But this argues no sincere regard for that feather on its own account. We have known a sailor to knock an Italian down for speaking disrespectfully of English tenor voices. The true and appropriate expression of reverence to a language is not by fighting for it, as a subject of national rivalry, but by taking earnest pains to write it with accuracy, practically to display its beauty, and to make its powers available for commensurate ends. Tried by this test, which of the three peoples that walk at the head of civilisation—French, Germans, or English—have best fulfilled the duties of their position?

To answer that the French only have been fully awake to these duties is painful, but too manifestly it is true.

* At this era, when Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and the contemporary dramatists, when Lord Bacon, Selden, Milton, and many of the leading English theologians (Jewel, Hooker, Chillingworth, and Jeremy Taylor), had appeared—in fact, all the *optimates* of the English literature—it must be remembered that the French literature was barely beginning. Montaigne was the only *deceased* author of eminence; Corneille was the only living author in general credit. The reader may urge that already, in the times of Catherine de Medici, there were eminent poets. In the reign of her son Charles IX. were several; and in the reign ot her husband there was even a celebrated *Pleiad* of poets. But these were merely *court* poets—they had no national name or life; and were already forgotten in the days of Louis XIII. As to German literature, *that* was a blank. Germany had then but one tolerable poet, viz., Opitz, whom some people (chiefly his countrymen) honour with the title of the German Dryden!

The French language possesses the very highest degree of merit, though not in the very highest mode of merit; it is the unique language of the planet as an instrument for giving effect to the powers, and for meeting the necessities, of social gaiety and colloquial intercourse. This is partly the effect, and partly the cause, of the social temperament which distinguishes the French: partly follows the national disposition, and partly leads to it. The adaptation of the language to the people, not perhaps more really prominent in this case than in others, is more conspicuously so; and it may be in a spirit of gratitude for this genial co-operation in their language that the French are in a memorable degree anxious to write it with elegance and correctness. They take a pride in doing so; and it is remarkable that grammatical inaccuracies, so common amongst ourselves, and common even amongst our literary people, are almost unknown amongst the educated French.*

* This the reader might be apt to doubt, if he were to judge of French grammar by French orthography. Until recently—that is, through the last thirty years—very few people in France, even of the educated classes, could spell. They spelt by procuration. The compositors of the press held a general power-of-attorney to spell for universal France. A *fac-simile* of the spelling which prevailed amongst the royal family of France at the time of the elder Revolution, is given in Cléry's Journal: it is terrific. Such forms occur, for instance, as *J'avoient* (J'avois) for *I had: J'été* (étois) for *I was.* But, in publishing such facts, the reader is not to imagine that Cléry meant to expose anything needing concealment. All people of distinction spelled in that lawless way; and the loyal valet doubtless no more thought it decorous for a man of rank to spell his own spelling, than to clean his own shoes or to wash his own linen. "Base is the man that pays," says Ancient Pistol; "Base is the man that spells," said the French of that century. It would have been vulgar to spell decently; and it was not illiterate to spell abominably; for literary men spelled not at all better; they also spelled by proxy, and by grace of compositors.

But mere fidelity to grammar would leave a *negative* impression: the respect which the French show to their language expresses itself chiefly in their way of managing it, that is, in their attention to style and diction. It is the rarest thing possible to find a French writer erring by sentences too long, too intricate, and loaded with clauses, or too clumsy in their structure. The very highest qualities of style are not much within the ideal of French composition; but in the executive results, French prose composition usually reveals an air of finish, of self-restraint under any possible temptation to *des longueurs*, and of graceful adroitness in the transitions.

Precisely the reverse of all this is found in the compositions of the German, who is the greatest nuisance, in what concerns the treatment of language, that the mind of man is capable of conceiving. Of his language, the German is proud, and with reason, for it is redundantly rich. Even in its Teutonic section, it is *so* rich as to be self-sufficing, and capable, though awkwardly, of dispensing with the Greek and Latin counter-section. This independence of alien resources has sometimes been even practically adopted as the basis of a dictionary, and officially patronized by adoption in the public *bureaus.* Some thirty years ago, the Prussian government was said to have introduced into the public service a dictionary * which rejected all words not purely vernacular. Such a word, for instance, as *philosophie* was not admissible; the indigenous word *weltweisheit* was held to be not only sufficient, which it really *is*, but exclusively legitimate. Yet, with all this scrupulosity and purism of veneration for his native language, to which he ascribes *every* quality of power and beauty, and amongst

* By Heinze, if I recollect; and founded partly on that of Wolff.

others—*credite posteri!*—sometimes even *vocal* beauty * and euphony, the true German has no sense of grace or deformity in the management of his language. Style, diction, the construction of sentences, are ideas perfectly without meaning to the German writer. If a whole book were made up of a single sentence, all collateral or subordinate ideas being packed into it as parenthetical intercalations—if this single sentence should even cover an acre of ground, the true German would see in all *that* no want of art, would recognise no opportunities thrown away for the display of beauty. The temple would in *his* eyes exist, because the materials of the temple—the stone, the lime, the iron, the timber—had been carted to the ground. A sentence, even when insulated and viewed apart for itself, is a subject for complex art: even *so* far it is capable of multiform beauty, and liable to a whole *nosology* of malconformations. But it is in the *relation* of sentences, in what Horace terms their "*junctura*," that the true life of composition resides. The mode of their *nexus*, the way in which one sentence is made to arise out of another, and to prepare the opening for a third: this is the great loom in which the textile process of the moving intellect reveals itself and prospers. Here the separate clauses of a period become architectural parts, aiding, relieving, supporting each other. But how can any approach to that effect, or any suggestion of it exist for him who hides and buries all openings for

* Foreigners do not often go so far as this; and yet an American, in his "Sketches of Turkey" (New York, 1833), characterizes the German (p. 478) not only as a soft and melodious language, but absolutely as "the *softest* of all European languages." Schiller and Goethe had a notion that it was capable of being hammered into euphony, that it was by possibility malleable in that respect, but then only by great labour of selection, and as a trick of rope-dancing ingenuity.

parts and graceful correspondences in one monotonous continuity of period, stretching over three octavo pages? Kant was a great man, but he was obtuse and deaf as an antediluvian boulder with regard to language and its capacities. He has sentences which have been measured by a carpenter, and some of them run two feet eight by six inches. Now, a sentence with that enormous span is fit only for the use of a megatherium or a pre-Adamite. Parts so remote as the beginning and the end of such a sentence can have no sensible relation to each other; not much as regards their logic, but none at all as regards their more *sensuous* qualities—rhythmus, for instance, or the continuity of metaphor. And it is clear that, if the internal relations of a sentence fade under the extravagant misproportion of its scale, *à fortiori* must the outer relations. If two figures, or other objects, are meant to modify each other visually by means of colour, of outline, or of expression, they must be brought into juxtaposition, or at least into neighbourhood. A chasm between them, so vast as to prevent the synthesis of the two objects in one co-existing field of vision, interrupts the play of all genial comparison. Periods, and clauses of periods, modify each other, and build up a whole, then only when the parts are shown *as* parts; cohering and conspiring to a common result. But if each part is separately so vast as to eclipse the disc of the adjacent parts, then substantially they are separate wholes, and do not coalesce to any joint or complex impression.

We English in this matter occupy a middle position between the French and the Germans. Agreeably to the general cast of the national character, our tendency is to degrade the value of the ornamental, whenever it is brought before us under any suggestion of comparison or rivalry with the substantial or grossly useful. Viewing the thoughts

as the substantial objects in a book, we are apt to regard the manner of presenting these thoughts as a secondary or even trivial concern. The one we typify as the metallic substance, the silver or gold, which constitutes the true value, that cannot perish in a service of plate; whereas the style too generally, in *our* estimate, represents the mere casual fashion given to the plate by the artist—an adjunct that any change of public taste may degrade into a positive disadvantage. But in this we English err greatly; and by these three capital oversights:—

1. It is certain that style, or (to speak by the most general expression) the management of language, ranks amongst the fine arts, and is able therefore to yield a separate intellectual pleasure quite apart from the interest of the subject treated. So far it is already one error to rate the value of style as if it were necessarily a secondary or subordinate thing. On the contrary, style has an *absolute* value, like the product of any other exquisite art, quite distinct from the value of the subject about which it is employed, and irrelatively to the subject; precisely as the fine workmanship of Scopas the Greek, or of Cellini the Florentine, is equally valued by the connoisseur, whether embodied in bronze or marble, in an ivory or a golden vase. But

2. If we *do* submit to this narrow valuation of style, founded on the interest of the subject to which it is ministerial, still, even on that basis, we English commit a capital blunder, which the French earnestly and sincerely escape; for, assuming that the thoughts involve the primary interest, still it must make all the difference in the world to the success of those thoughts, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to expel the doubts or darkness that may have settled upon them; and, secondly, in cases where the business is, not to establish new convictions, but to

carry old convictions into operative life and power, whether they are treated in the way best fitted to rekindle in the mind a practical sense of their value. Style has two separate functions—first, to brighten the *intelligibility* of a subject which is obscure to the understanding; secondly, to regenerate the normal *power* and impressiveness of a subject which has become dormant to the sensibilities. Darkness gathers upon many a theme, sometimes from previous mistreatment, but oftener from original perplexities investing its very nature. Upon the style it is, if we take that word in its largest sense—upon the skill and art of the developer, that these perplexities greatly depend for their illumination. Look, again, at the other class of cases, when the difficulties are not for the understanding but for the practical sensibilities as applicable to the services of life. The subject, suppose, is already understood sufficiently; but it is lifeless as a motive. It is not new light that is to be communicated, but old torpor that is to be dispersed. The writer is not summoned to convince, but to persuade. Decaying lineaments are to be retraced, and faded colouring to be refreshed. Now, these offices of style are really not essentially below the level of those other offices attached to the original *discovery* of truth. He that to an old conviction, long since inoperative and dead, gives the regeneration that carries it back into the heart as a vital power of action—he, again, that by new light, or by light trained to flow through a new channel, reconciles to the understanding a truth which hitherto had seemed dark or doubtful—both these men are really, *quoad* us that benefit by their services, the *discoverers* of the truth. Yet these results are amongst the possible gifts of style. Light to *see* the road, power to *advance along* it—such being amongst the promises and proper functions of

style, it is a capital error, under the idea of its ministeriality, to undervalue this great organ of the advancing intellect—an organ which is equally important considered as a tool for the culture and *popularization* of truth, and also (if it had no use at all in that way) as a mode *per se* of the beautiful, and a fountain of intellectual pleasure. The vice of that appreciation, which we English apply to style, lies in representing it as a mere ornamental accident of written composition — a trivial embellishment, like the mouldings of furniture, the cornices of ceilings, or the arabesques of tea-urns. On the contrary, it is a product of art the rarest, subtlest, and most intellectual; and, like other products of the fine arts, it is then finest when it is most eminently disinterested—that is, most conspicuously detached from gross palpable uses. Yet, in very many cases, it really *has* the obvious uses of that gross palpable order; as in the cases just noticed, when it gives light to the understanding, or power to the will, removing obscurities from one set of truths, and into another circulating the life-blood of sensibility. In these cases, meantime, the style is contemplated as a thing separable from the thoughts; in fact, as the *dress* of the thoughts—a robe that may be laid aside at pleasure. But

3. There arises a case entirely different, where style cannot be regarded as a *dress* or alien covering, but where style becomes the *incarnation* of the thoughts. The human body is not the dress or apparel of the human spirit; far more mysterious is the mode of their union. Call the two elements A and B; then it is impossible to point out A as existing aloof from B, or *vice versa*. A exists in and through B, B exists in and through A. No profound observer can have failed to observe this illustrated in the capacities of style. Imagery is sometimes not the

mere alien apparelling of a thought, and of a nature to be detached from the thought, but is the co-efficient that, being superadded to something else, absolutely *makes* the thought as a *third* and separate existence.

In this third case, our English tendency to undervalue style goes more deeply into error than in the other two. In those two we simply underrate the enormous services that are or might be rendered by style to the interests of truth and human thinking; but, in the third case, we go near to abolish a mode of existence. This is not so impossible an offence as might be supposed. There are many ideas in Leibnitz, in Kant, in the schoolmen, in Plato at times, and certainly in Aristotle (as the ideas of antiperistasis, entelecheia, &c.), which are only to be arrested and realized by a signal *effort*—by a struggle and a *nisus* both of reflection and of large combination. Now, where so much depends upon an effort—on a spasmodic strain—to fail by a hair's breadth is to collapse. For instance, the idea involved in the word transcendental,* as used in the critical philo-

* "*Transcendental.*"—Kant, who was the most sincere, honourable, and truthful of human beings, always understood himself. He hated tricks, disguises, or mystifications, simulation equally with dissimulation; and his love of the English was built avowedly on their *veracity.* So far he has an extra chance of intelligibility. On the other hand, of all men, he had the least talent for explaining himself, or communicating his views to others. Whenever Kant undertakes to render into popular language the secrets of metaphysics, one inevitably thinks of Bardolph's attempt to analyse and justify the word *accommodation*:—"*Accommodation*—that is, when a man is (as they say) accommodated; or when a man is being whereby he may be thought to be accommodated, which is an excellent thing." There are sometimes Eleusinian mysteries, sealed by nature herself, the mighty mother, as *aporreta,* things essentially ineffable and unutterable in vulgar ears. Long, for instance, he laboured, but vainly he laboured to render intelligible the scholastic idea of the transcen-

sophy of Kant, illustrates the metaphysical relations of style.

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dental. This should have been easy to deal with; for on the one side lay the *transcendent*, on the other the *immanent*, two buoys to map out the channel; and yet did Kant, throughout his long life, fail to satisfy any one man who was not previously and independently in possession of the idea. Difficulties of this nature should seem as little related to artifice of style and diction as geometrical difficulties; and yet it is certain that, by throwing the stress and emphasis of the perplexity upon the exact verbal *nodus* of the problem, a better structure of his sentences would have guided Kant to a readier apprehension of the real shape which the difficulty assumed to the ordinary student.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH MANNERS.

AN impression prevails pretty generally that the manners of our French neighbours are more polished than our own, and by most people this is *assumed* as a thing conceded even amongst ourselves, who are the persons most interested in denying it. A concession, however, made in ignorance, avails nothing. Such a concession argues the candour of the conceding party, but not therefore the truth of the charge. We English are ready enough to tax our countrymen with such vices of deportment or habits as are flagrantly obtrusive; and sometimes even with such as are altogether imaginary.* A fault is not necessarily a real one, because

* Witness the malicious charge against all of us English, so current in the mouths of both Frenchmen and the English themselves, that from aristocratic jealousies as to the rank and pretensions of parties not personally known and guaranteed to us, we avoid on the Continent beyond all other society that of our own countrymen. If this were even true, there might be alleged some reasons for it not altogether illiberal. Meantime it happens, that the very contradictory charge to this exists as a standing reproach to the English in our own literature. From Lord Chesterfield's days downwards to this present era, it has been made an argument of our national absurdity, that we English herd only with our own countrymen—that we do not *virtually* quit England—and that in this way we only of all European nations fail to improve by travel, refusing, in fact, to benefit by that extended experience which originally had been the ostensible object of our travels. Malignant calumniator, whether foreign or (as too often happens) native English, reconcile these charges, if you can!

it happens to be denounced by English people as an English fault; nor, if it were so, ought we to lay any great stress upon it, so long as it is demonstrable that these same English accusers have overlooked the counterbalancing fault in the particular nation with which they are comparing us. We, for our part, cannot afford to be so candid as all *that*. Candour is a very costly virtue—it costs us a most distressing effort of mind to confess anything, however true, against ourselves or against our country, unless when we have a "consideration" for doing so. In the present case, we shall find this consideration in the power of retaliation upon the French by means of corresponding exceptions to *their* manners. Luckily, if *we* offend in one way, *they* offend not less conspicuously in another. Having this set-off against our ancient enemy, we are not indisposed to admit the truth against ourselves, which else it would have been quite out of the question to expect of us.

The idea involved in what we call *manners* is a very complex one; and in some of its elements, as we may have occasion to show farther on, it represents qualities of character (or also of temperament) that are perfectly neutral as regards the *social* expression of manners. This social expression, which is the chief thing that men think of when describing manners as good or bad, lies in two capital features: first of all, in respect for others; secondly, in self-respect. Now, the English fail too often in the first, the French in the second. *There* is the balance. The French have reason to take *us* for models in all which regards the first; we *them* as regards the second.

The term "*respect* for others" may seem too strong for the case. *Respect*, in its graver expressions, may have no opening for itself in casual intercourse with strangers.

But simple decency of appearance, and decorum of manner, warrant that limited mode of respect which expresses itself by courtesy and affability. You listen to the stranger with complaisance; you answer him with cheerfulness. So much of attention might be justified in the most aristocratic country by a decent exterior, by a demeanour not brutal, and by a style of conversation not absolutely repulsive. Here it is, and in all cases where the relation between strangers rests upon the simple footing of their common humanity, that the Frenchman has so great an advantage over the Englishman. Every Frenchman has been trained from his infancy to recognise in all human beings an indefeasible claim upon his civility. To listen without visible impatience upon being asked by a stranger for information—to answer without abruptness or marked expression of hurry, the Frenchman considers a mere debt to the universal rights of human nature; and to refuse the payment of a debt so easily settled he would regard as a dishonour to himself. The Englishman, on the other hand, in the same circumstances, is too often morose and churlish; he answers fretfully, hurriedly, and briefly, as to one who is interrupting him unseasonably, or even robbing him of his time; and at any rate it is rare that he answers as if he had a pleasure in giving the information asked. This tone of harshness and incivility it is that constantly deters people of quick sensibility from addressing themselves at random, in any case of difficulty, to the street-passengers in London. Often have we observed timid or nervous people drawing up into a corner, and anxiously reviewing the stream of passing faces, in order to select one that might promise patience enough and kindness for enduring the interruption. This repulsive aspect of British manners wears even an exaggerated shape in Scotland. London is not

half so uncivilized in this respect as some of the lowland Scottish cities. Ask a question of ten successive passengers, and nine of the answers will give you reason to wish that you had held your tougue. Even sexual gallantry avails not always to prompt courtesy. A handsome young lady from the northern Highlands of Scotland, used to the courtesy of her Celtic countrymen (for the Scotch Highlanders have no resemblance in this point to the lowland Scotch), told us that on her first visit to Glasgow, happening to inquire her way of a working-man, instead of any direction whatever, she received a lecture for her presumption in supposing that "folk" had nothing else to do but to answer idle people's questions. This was her first application. Her second was less mortifying, but equally unprofitable. The man in that second case uttered no word at all, civil or uncivil; but with a semicircular wave backwards of his right arm, jerked his right thumb over his right shoulder, after which he repeated the same manœuvre with his left arm, left thumb, and left shoulder—leaving the young Inverness-shire lady utterly mystified by his hieroglyphics, which to this hour she has not solved, though still thankful that he had forborne to lecture her.

At first sight, then, it may be easily imagined how fascinating * is the aspect of a society moulded by French

* A Glasgow or Paisley man, who published an account of his tour to Paris some 16 or 18 years ago, furnishes a memorable illustration of the profound impression made on him by a sudden transition from his native country to France. He professes himself a rigid Presbyterian, and everywhere shows a bigoted hatred of Popery, which at times expresses itself most indecorously; for instance, as one shocking and abominable expression of his own rancorous bigotry (which it is to be hoped that the most frantic of Presbyterian zealots would indignantly disown as at all within the limits of toleration), he acknowledges a vehement impulse driving him towards some public outrage

courtesy, coming in direct succession to that harsher form which society wears in the streets of this island. And yet even this French courtesy has been the object of suspicion in reference to its real origin. Mr. Scott of Aberdeen, a celebrated man in his day,* was assured, during one of his French tours, and not by any envious foreigner, but by a discerning Frenchman, that the true ground of French affability was, not any superior kindness of heart disposable for petty occasions, but the national love of talking. A French woman comes out of her road, or leaves her shop, in order to finish her instructions as to your proper route, so that mistake shall be impossible. She does this with an *empressement* that seems truly amiable, because apparently altogether disinterested. "By no means," said her cynical countryman to Mr. Scott, "not at all disinterested. What she seeks to gratify is far less any temper of general kindliness than the furious passion for hearing herself talk. Garrulity is what you gentlemen from England have mistaken for diffusive courtesy." There *is* so far a foundation for this caustic remark, that undoubtedly the French are

or expression of scorn to the ceremonial and public services of the national religion; in particular he owns a rabid desire to spit into the vessel of holy water at the church-doors. Yet, in spite of this insane bigotry, such was his astonishment at the general courtesy amongst the French, and such was his sense of the public peace produced by this courtesy, combined with general sobriety, that he seriously propounds the question—whether, even the sacrifice of Protestant purity, and the adoption of Popery, would not be a cheap price to pay, if by such changes—changes, remember, in what *he* considers the supreme of all truths—it were possible to purchase these French advantages of quiet and refinement.

* "*His day*,"—viz., the day of Waterloo, and six years later. He died in 1821 from the consequences of a duel fought in a hot summer season: with cooler weather, his wounds were not of a dangerous class. He published two celebrated Tours to the Continent, one after the first conquest of Paris in 1814, and a second after Waterloo.

the most garrulous people upon earth. Look into the novels of Eugene Sue and of Dumas, which reflect pretty accurately the external features of Parisian society, and you will perceive how indispensable to the daily comfort of the general population is copious talking, and unlimited indulgence of petty personal curiosity. These habits naturally support and strengthen the auxiliary habit of cheerful politeness. To tempt others into the spirit of communicativeness, it is indispensable to open their hearts by courteous and genial treatment. But, allowing for this undoubted national infirmity, viz., the intense predisposition to gossiping and *commérage*—it still remains undeniable, that the French, with less of a profound or impassioned benignity than some of their neighbours, have more by a great deal of that light-hearted, surface good-nature, which applies itself to trivial and uncostly services.

The garrulity of the French temperament, therefore, if it mingles a little as a selfish element in the French affability, is yet so far valuable as it offers a collateral pledge for its continuance. This demur, therefore, will not seriously disturb the pretensions of the French to the most *amiable* form of national politeness that has ever descended deeply amongst the body of the people. But another demur there is, not suggested by any countryman of their own, but irresistibly forced upon the notice of us islanders by the clamorous contrast with our own manners, which *does* undoubtedly probe the value of their refinement in a way painfully humiliating. Ask any candid and *observing* tourist in France for the result of his experience, and he will agree that generally at the *table-d'hôte,* and especially when the company is composed chiefly of flying travellers, the French manifest a selfishness and an exclusiveness of attention to their own comfort, which is shocking to a native of this

country. In thorough contradiction to the prevailing notions of this country, which, on such subjects, are almost uniformly unsound, the French, nationally, are great eaters. They and the Germans are the two most gormandizing races in Europe. This gratification is not for a moment laid under any restraint by the verbal sacrifices to civility. The dishes are rifled of their best luxuries in the same unblushing spirit of selfishness which would govern most of us in escaping from a burning theatre. Of course no individual experience is sufficient for sustaining this as a *national* charge; but we have heard concurrent testimonies from so many travellers to the same effect, all tending to show a general selfishness amongst the French in any similar case of competition, which the cloak of external and verbal politeness does but the more powerfully expose. Such an exposure, if true and unexaggerated, stands out in violent contrast to all that we have ourselves observed of British life. Through a course of many years' familiarity with our own mails, and other public carriages, we never once witnessed a dinner at which the spirit of mutual attention and self-sacrifice did not preside.

Even in respect for others, therefore, where generally the French so much excel ourselves, yet when a selfish interest thwarts the natural tendency of their manners, this tendency appears to give way. But it is in *self*-respect that the French most of all betray their inferiority; and here it is the countervailing excellence of British manners asserts itself. The stern and too often surly Briton, whether Englishman or Scotchman, is saved by this very form of unamiableness from the pettiness of garrulity. If sometimes he is disagreeable, at least he is not undignified; if he presents an unattractive phasis to society, at any rate he is not unmanly. Now, of all unmanliness, intellectually, though

not morally speaking, the habits of gossip and loquaciousness are about the most degrading.

Yet gossiping and garrulity are not the most prominent infirmities by which the French betray their deficient self-respect. Gesticulation, as an inseparable organ of French conversation, is even more immediately disfiguring to the ideal of personal dignity. A gesticulating nation cannot be a dignified nation. A running accompaniment of pantomime may be picturesque, and in harmony with the general vivacity amongst harlequins and columbines, but cannot for a moment reconcile itself with any authentic standard of human dignity. The French have been notorious through generations for their puerile affectation of Roman forms, models, and historic precedents ; and yet, beyond all other races known to history, the Roman is that which it would be most difficult to represent, as expressing the grandeur of its purposes by gesticulation or histrionic pantomime.

This feature of French manners, and the essential degradation which cleaves to it, ought to be kept before the public eye at this moment, when not only the increasing intercourse with France, but also the insensible contagion from our own popular novels, too often written by those who are semi-denizens of Paris, violently tend to the transfiguration of our own ideals, so greatly superior in this particular to those of France. In many of these novels we have it said as a matter of course, that A or B "shrugged his shoulders." But what Englishman, unless ridiculously metamorphised by Paris, so as absolutely to have forgotten his own native usages, ever uses this odious gesture, or *could* use it with any hope of not disgusting his audience? not to mention other forms of pantomime still more degrading. Though countenanced by good society in Paris (such, for example, as the application of the finger to the side of

the nostrils, together with an accompanying advancement of the face, by way of expressing a signal of knowingness or insinuation of secret understanding), even the words and phrases imported by our novels, and which are already settling into vernacular use, are sometimes fitted to import also the vulgar sentiment which they embody. Twenty-five years ago the vile ejaculation "*Bah!*" was utterly unknown to the English public. Now, and entirely through the currency given to it by our own novels, it has become the most popular expression for dismissing with contempt any opinion or suggestion of the person with whom you are conversing. Sir Edward Lytton was amongst the earliest and deepest offenders. Anything more brutal or more insolent, in the way of summary contempt, cannot be imagined. To reject your companion's thoughts may sometimes be requisite in mere sincerity; but to do so with this plebeian want of consideration, leaving behind it the same sense of a stinging insult as would follow the act of puffing the smoke from a tobacco-pipe into your face, is a striking instance of the real coarseness which too often creeps amongst the refinements of the French.

This instance, by the way, illustrates also the fact that the French swerve at times from the law of respect to others not less grossly (though less frequently) than from the law of self-respect; and it is worthy of remark that they swerve *uniformly* from the proper tone of respect for others, when it happens that this respect is precluded from expressing itself (as between equals it does) by means of kindness and courtesy. Thus, in the intercourse between master and servant, the French always hold a false tone, whether in real life, or in the imitations of the drama. The French master is never dignified, though he may chance to be tyrannical; and the French servant, without meaning

to be so, is always disrespectfully familiar. The late Lady Blessington well illustrated the difference between a French and an English footman. "If," said she, "I ask my English servant any question about the residence and occupation of a petitioner who may have called to solicit charity, he answers rigorously to the particular questions I put; not by one hair's-breadth does he allow himself to wander into circumstances about which I have not questioned him. But the Frenchman fancies himself called upon to give his opinion upon every point, however remotely connected with my inquiries. He loses himself in volumes of garrulity; and, without designing any disrespect, practically by his voluble manner forgets that he is speaking to his mistress."

To the manners of a nation belong also its usages, and some of these amongst the French are essentially vulgar. That field would lead us too far. But in the meantime, when peace and the increasing facilities of locomotion are annually bringing us more and more within French influence, it may have a seasonable use to direct the thoughts upon the current prejudice that French manners furnish any absolute model—to separate that which is really good and beautiful from that which rests upon false foundations—and, by suggesting a spirit of jealous discrimination in relation to foreign manners, eventually to warn us against exotic forms of coxcombry, and sometimes against exotic forms of sheer slang and brutality.

CHARLES LAMB.

It sounds paradoxical, but is not so in a bad sense, to say, that in every literature of large compass some authors will be found to rest much of the interest which surrounds them on their essential *non*-popularity. They are good for the very reason that they are not in conformity to the current taste. They interest because to the world they are *not* interesting. They attract by means of their repulsion. Not as though it could separately furnish a reason for loving a book, that the majority of men had found it repulsive. *Prima facie*, it must suggest some presumption *against* a book, that it has failed to gain public attention. To have roused hostility indeed, to have kindled a feud against its own principles or its temper, may happen to be a good sign. *That* argues power. Hatred may be promising. The deepest revolutions of mind sometimes begin in hatred. But simply to have left a reader unimpressed, is in itself a neutral result, from which the inference is doubtful. Yet even *that*, even simple failure to impress, may happen at times to be a result from positive powers in a writer, from special originalities, such as rarely reflect themselves in the mirror of the ordinary understanding. It seems little to be perceived, how much the great scriptural* idea of the

* "*Scriptural*" we call it, because this element of thought, so indispensable to a profound philosophy of morals, is not simply *more*

worldly and the *unworldly* is found to emerge in literature as well as in life. In reality, the very same combinations of moral qualities, infinitely varied, which compose the harsh physiognomy of what we call worldliness in the living groups of life, must unavoidably present themselves in books. A library divides into sections of worldly and unworldly, even as a crowd of men divides into that same majority and minority. The world has an instinct for recognising its own; and recoils from certain qualities when exemplified in books, with the same disgust or defective sympathy as would have governed it in real life. From qualities, for instance, of childlike simplicity, of shy profundity, or of inspired self-communion, the world does and must turn away its face towards grosser, bolder, more determined, or more intelligible expressions of character and intellect; and not otherwise in literature, nor at all less in literature, than it does in the realities of life.

Charles Lamb, if any ever *was*, is amongst the class here contemplated; he, if any ever *has*, ranks amongst writers whose works are destined to be for ever unpopular, and yet for ever interesting; interesting, moreover, by means of those very qualities which guarantee their non-popularity. The same qualities which will be found forbidding to the world and the thoughtless, which will be found insipid to many even amongst robust and powerful minds, are exactly those which will continue to command a select audience in every generation. The prose essays, under the signature of *Elia*, form the most delightful section amongst Lamb's works. They traverse a pecu-

used in Scripture than elsewhere, but is so exclusively significant or intelligible amidst the correlative ideas of Scripture, as to be absolutely insusceptible of translation into classical Greek or classical Latin.

liar field of observation, sequestered from general interest; and they are composed in a spirit too delicate and unobtrusive to catch the ear of the noisy crowd, clamouring for strong sensations. But this retiring delicacy itself, the pensiveness chequered by gleams of the fanciful, and the humour that is touched with cross lights of pathos, together with the picturesque quaintness of the objects casually described, whether men, or things, or usages, and, in the rear of all this, the constant recurrence to ancient recollections and to decaying forms of household life, as things retiring before the tumult of new and revolutionary generations; these traits in combination communicate to the papers a grace and strength of originality which nothing in any literature approaches, whether for degree or kind of excellence, except the most felicitous papers of Addison, such as those on Sir Roger de Coverley, and some others in the same vein of composition. They resemble Addison's papers also in the diction, which is natural and idiomatic, even to carelessness. They are equally faithful to the truth of nature; and in this only they differ remarkably—that the sketches of Elia reflect the stamp and impress of the writer's own character, whereas in all those of Addison the personal peculiarities of the delineator (though known to the reader from the beginning through the account of the club) are nearly quiescent. Now and then they are recalled into a momentary notice, but they do not act, or at all modify his pictures of Sir Roger or Will Wimble. *They* are slightly and amiably eccentric; but the Spectator himself, in describing them, takes the station of an ordinary observer.

Everywhere, indeed, in the writings of Lamb, and not merely in his *Elia*, the character of the writer co-operates in an under current to the effect of the thing written. To

understand, in the fullest sense, either the gaiety or the tenderness of a particular passage, you must have some insight into the particular bias of the writer's mind, whether native and original, or impressed gradually by the accidents of situation; whether simply developed out of predispositions by the action of life, or violently scorched into the constitution by some fierce fever of calamity. There is in modern literature a whole class of writers, though not a large one, standing within the same category; some marked originality of character in the writer becomes a co-efficient with what he says to a common result; you must sympathize with this *personality* in the author before you can appreciate the most significant parts of his views. In most books the writer figures as a mere abstraction, without sex or age or local station, whom the reader banishes from his thoughts. What is written seems to proceed from a blank intellect, not from a man clothed with fleshly peculiarities and differences. These peculiarities and differences neither do, nor (generally speaking) *could* intermingle with the texture of the thoughts, so as to modify their force or their direction. In such books, and they form the vast majority, there is nothing to be found or to be looked for beyond the direct objective. (*Sit venia verbo !*) But, in a small section of books, the objective in the thought becomes confluent with the subjective in the thinker—the two forces unite for a joint product; and fully to enjoy the product, or fully to apprehend either element, both must be known. It is singular, and worth inquiring into, for the reason that the Greek and Roman literature had no such books. Timon of Athens, or Diogenes, one may conceive qualified for this mode of authorship, had journalism existed to rouse them in those days; their "articles" would no doubt have been fearfully caustic. But, as *they* failed to produce anything,

and Lucian in an after age is scarcely characteristic enough for the purpose, perhaps we may pronounce Rabelais and Montaigne the earliest of writers in the class described. In the century following *theirs*, came Sir Thomas Browne, and immediately after *him* La Fontaine. Then came Swift, Sterne, with others less distinguished; in Germany, Hippel, the friend of Kant, Harmann, the obscure; and the greatest of the whole body—John Paul Fr. Richter. In *him*, from the strength and determinateness of his nature, as well as from the great extent of his writing, the philosophy of this interaction between the author as a human agency and his theme as an intellectual re-agency, might best be studied. From *him* might be derived the largest number of cases, illustrating boldly this absorption of the universal into the concrete—of the pure intellect into the human nature of the author. But nowhere could illustrations be found more interesting—shy, delicate, evanescent—shy as lightning, delicate and evanescent as the coloured pencillings on a frosty night from the northern lights, than in the better parts of Lamb.

To appreciate Lamb, therefore, it is requisite that his character and temperament should be understood in their coyest and most wayward features. A capital defect it would be if these could not be gathered silently from Lamb's works themselves. It would be a fatal mode of dependency upon an alien and separable accident if they needed an external commentary. But they do *not*. The syllables lurk up and down the writings of Lamb which decipher his eccentric nature. His character lies there dispersed in anagram; and to any attentive reader the regathering and restoration of the total word from its scattered parts is inevitable without an effort. Still it is always a satisfaction in knowing a result, to know also its

why and *how;* and in so far as every character is likely to be modified by the particular experience, sad or joyous, through which the life has travelled, it is a good contribution towards the knowledge of that resulting character as a whole to have a sketch of that particular experience. What trials did it impose? What energies did it task? What temptations did it unfold? These calls upon the moral powers, which in music so stormy, many a life is doomed to hear, how were they faced? The character in a capital degree moulds oftentimes the life, but the life *always* in a subordinate degree moulds the character. And the character being in this case of Lamb so much of a key to the writings, it becomes important that the life should be traced, however briefly, as a key to the character.

That is *one* reason for detaining the reader with some slight record of Lamb's career. Such a record by preference and of right belongs to a case where the intellectual display, which is the sole ground of any public interest at all in the man, has been intensely modified by the *humanities* and moral *personalities* distinguishing the subject. We read a Physiology, and need no information as to the life and conversation of its author; a meditative poem becomes far better understood by the light of such information; but a work of genial and at the same time eccentric sentiment, wandering upon untrodden paths, is barely intelligible without it. There is a good reason for arresting judgment on the writer, that the court may receive evidence on the life of the man. But there is another reason, and, in any other place, a better; which reason lies in the extraordinary value of the life considered separately for itself. Logically, it is not allowable to say that *here;* and, considering the principal purpose of this paper, any possible *independent* value of the life must rank as a better reason

for reporting it. Since, in a case where the original object is professedly to estimate the writings of a man, whatever promises to further that object must, merely by that tendency, have, in relation to that place, a momentary advantage which it would lose if valued upon a more abstract scale. Liberated from this casual office of throwing light upon a book—raised to its grander station of a solemn deposition to the moral capacities of man in conflict with calamity—viewed as a return made into the chanceries of heaven—upon an issue directed from that court to try the amount of power lodged in a poor desolate pair of human creatures for facing the very anarchy of storms—this obscure life of the two Lambs, brother and sister (for the two lives were one life), rises into a grandeur that is not paralleled once in a generation.

Rich, indeed, in moral instruction was the life of Charles Lamb; and perhaps in one chief result it offers to the thoughtful observer a lesson of consolation that is awful, and of hope that ought to be immortal, viz., in the record which it furnishes, that by meekness of submission, and by earnest conflict with evil, in the spirit of cheerfulness, it is possible ultimately to disarm or to blunt the very heaviest of curses—even the curse of lunacy. Had it been whispered, in hours of infancy, to Lamb, by the angel who stood by his cradle—"Thou, and the sister that walks by ten years before thee, shall be through life, each to each, the solitary fountain of comfort; and except it be from this fountain of mutual love, except it be as brother and sister, ye shall not taste the cup of peace on earth!"—here, if there was sorrow in reversion, there was also consolation.

But what funeral swamps would have instantly ingulfed this consolation, had some meddling fiend prolonged the revelation, and, holding up the curtain from the sad future

a little longer, had said scornfully—"Peace on earth! Peace for you two, Charles and Mary Lamb! What peace is possible under the curse which even now is gathering against your heads? Is there peace on earth for the lunatic—peace for the parenticide—peace for the girl that, without warning, and without time granted for a penitential cry to Heaven, sends her mother to the last audit?" And then, without treachery, speaking bare truth, this prophet of wo might have added—"Thou also, thyself, Charles Lamb, thou in thy proper person, shalt enter the skirts of this dreadful hail-storm; even thou shalt taste the secrets of lunacy, and enter as a captive its house of bondage;* whilst over thy sister the accursed scorpion shall hang suspended through life, like Death hanging over the beds of hospitals, striking at times, but more often threatening to strike; or withdrawing its instant menaces only to lay bare her mind more bitterly to the persecutions of a haunted memory!" Considering the nature of the calamity, in the first place; considering, in the second place, its life-long duration; and, in the last place, considering the quality of the resistance by which it was met, and under what circumstances of humble resources in money or friends—we have come to the deliberate judgment, that the whole range of history scarcely presents a more affecting spectacle of perpetual sorrow, humiliation, or conflict, and that was supported to the end (that is, through forty years) with more resignation, or with more absolute victory.

Charles Lamb was born in February of the year 1775. His immediate descent was humble; for his father, though on one particular occasion civilly described as a "scrivener," was in reality a domestic servant to Mr. Salt—a bencher

* Lamb was himself confined for six weeks at one period of his life in a lunatic asylum.

(and, therefore, a barrister of some standing) in the Inner Temple. John Lamb, the father, belonged by birth to Lincoln; from which city, being transferred to London whilst yet a boy, he entered the service of Mr. Salt without delay; and apparently from this period, throughout his life, continued in this good man's household to support the honourable relation of a Roman client to his *patronus*, much more than that of a mercenary servant to a transient and capricious master. The terms on which Mr. S. seems to have lived with the family of the Lambs, argue a kindness and a liberality of nature on both sides. John Lamb recommended himself as an attendant by the versatility of his accomplishments; and Mr. Salt, being a widower without children, which means, in effect, an old bachelor, naturally valued that encyclopædic range of dexterity which made his house independent of external aid for every mode of service. To kill one's own mutton is but an operose way of arriving at a dinner, and often a more costly way; whereas, to combine one's own carpenter, locksmith, hair-dresser, groom, &c., all in one man's person—to have a Robinson Crusoe, up to all emergencies of life, always in waiting—is a luxury of the highest class for one who values his ease.

A consultation is held more freely with a man familiar to one's eye, and more profitably with a man aware of one's peculiar habits. And another advantage from such an arrangement is, that one gets any little alteration or repair executed on the spot. To hear is to obey, and by an inversion of Pope's rule—

"One always *is*, and never *to be*, blest."

People of one sole accomplishment, like the *homo unius libri*, are usually within that narrow circle disagreeably perfect, and, therefore, apt to be arrogant. People who can do all things, usually do every one of them ill; and living in a constant effort to deny this too palpable fact,

they become irritably vain. But Mr. Lamb the elder seems to have been bent on perfection. He did all things; he did them all well; and yet was neither gloomily arrogant, nor testily vain. And being conscious apparently that all mechanic excellencies tend to illiberal results, unless counteracted by perpetual sacrifices to the graces, he went so far as to cultivate poetry; he even printed his poems, and were we possessed of a copy (which we are *not*, nor probably is the Vatican), it would give us pleasure at this point to digress for a moment, and to cut them up, purely on considerations of respect to the author's memory. It is hardly to be supposed that they did not really merit castigation; and we should best show the sincerity of our respect for Mr. Lamb, senior, in all those cases where we *could* conscientiously profess respect by an unlimited application of the knout in the cases where we could *not*.

The whole family of the Lambs seems to have won from Mr. Salt the consideration which is granted to humble friends; and from acquaintances nearer to their own standing, to have won a tenderness of esteem such as is granted to decayed gentry. Yet naturally, the social rank of the parents, as people still living, must have operated disadvantageously for the children. It is hard, even for the practised philosopher, to distinguish aristocratic graces of manner, and capacities of delicate feeling, in people whose very hearth and dress bear witness to the servile humility of their station. Yet such distinctions, as wild gifts of nature, timidly and half unconsciously asserted themselves in the unpretending Lambs. Already in *their* favour there existed a silent privilege analogous to the famous one of Lord Kinsale.* He, by special grant from

* Whom, by the way, a modern Peerage tells us that, strictly speaking (or rather strictly spelling), we ought to call *Kingsale*. Very

the crown, is allowed, when standing before the king, to forget that he is not himself a king; the bearer of that peerage, through all generations, has the privilege of wearing his hat in the royal presence. By a general though tacit concession of the same nature, the rising generation of the Lambs, John and Charles, the two sons, and Mary Lamb, the only daughter, were permitted to forget that their grandmother had been a housekeeper for sixty years, and that their father had worn a livery. Charles Lamb, individually, was so entirely humble, and so careless of social distinctions, that he has taken pleasure in recurring to these very facts in the family records amongst the most genial of his Elia recollections. He only continued to remember, without shame, and with a peculiar tenderness, these badges of plebeian rank when everybody else, amongst the few survivors that could have known of their existence, had long dismissed them from their thoughts.

Probably through Mr. Salt's interest it was that Charles Lamb, in the autumn of 1782, when he wanted something more than four months of completing his eighth year, received a presentation to the magnificent school of Christ's Hospital. The late Dr. Arnold, when contrasting the school of his own boyish experience, Winchester, with Rugby, the school confided to his management, found nothing so much to regret in the circumstances of the latter as its forlorn condition with respect to historical traditions. Wherever these were wanting, it occurred to Dr. Arnold that something of a compensatory effect for impressing the imagination might be obtained by connecting every important school with the nation through the link of annual prizes issuing from the exchequer. An official

possibly. But, if so, we have been wrong throughout our whole erroneous life; and it is too late now to correct our spelling.

basis of national patronage might prove a substitute for an antiquarian or ancestral basis. Happily for the great educational foundations of London, none of them is in the naked condition of Rugby. Westminster, St. Paul's, Merchant Tailors', the Charter-house, &c., are all crowned with historical recollections; and Christ's Hospital, besides the original honours of its foundation, so fitted to a consecrated place in a youthful imagination—an asylum for boy-students, provided by a boy king (Edward VI.)—a king innocent, religious, prematurely wise, and prematurely called away from earth—has also a mode of perpetual connexion with the state. It enjoys, therefore, *both* of Dr. Arnold's advantages. Indeed, all the great foundation schools of London, bearing in their very codes of organization the impress of a double function—viz., the conservation of sound learning and of pure religion—wear something of a monastic or cloistral character in their aspect and usages, which is peculiarly impressive, and even pathetic, amidst the uproars of a capital the most colossal and tumultuous upon earth.

Here Lamb remained until his fifteenth year, which year threw him on the world, and brought him alongside the golden dawn of the French Revolution. Here he learned a little elementary Greek, and of Latin more than a little, for his Latin notes to Mr. Cary (of Dante celebrity) though brief, are sufficient to reveal a true sense of what is graceful and idiomatic in Latinity. *We* say this, who have studied that subject more than most men. It is not that Lamb would have found it an easy task to compose a long paper in Latin—nobody *can* find it easy to do what he has no motive for habitually practising; but a single sentence of Latin wearing the secret countersign of the "sweet Roman hand," ascertains sufficiently that, in reading Latin classics, a man feels and comprehends their peculiar force or beauty. That is enough. It is requisite to a man's

expansion of mind that he should make acquaintance with a literature so radically differing from all modern literature as is the Latin. It is *not* requisite that he should practise Latin composition. Here, therefore, Lamb obtained in sufficient perfection one priceless accomplishment, which even singly throws a graceful air of liberality over all the rest of a man's attainments: having rarely any pecuniary value, it challenges the more attention to its intellectual value. Here also Lamb commenced the friendships of his life; and of all which he formed he lost none. Here it was, as the consummation and crown of his advantages from the time-honoured hospital, that he came to know "Poor S. T. C." * τον θαυμασιωτατον.

Until 1796, it is probable that he lost sight of Coleridge, who was then occupied with Cambridge, having been transferred thither as a privileged "Grecian" from Christ's Hospital. That year, 1796, was a year of change and fearful calamity for Charles Lamb. On that year revolved the wheels of his after life. During the three years succeeding to his school days, he had held a clerkship in the South Sea House. In 1795, he was transferred to the India House. As a junior clerk, he could not receive more than a slender salary; but even this was important to the support of his parents and sister. They lived together in lodgings near Holborn; and in the spring of 1796, Miss Lamb (having previously shown signs of lunacy at intervals), in a sudden paroxysm of her disease, seized a knife from the dinner table, and stabbed her mother, who died upon the spot. A coroner's inquest easily ascertained the nature

* "*Poor S. T C.*"—The affecting expression by which Coleridge indicates himself in the few lines written during his last illness for an inscription upon his own grave; lines ill constructed in point of diction and compression, but otherwise speaking from the depths of his heart.

of a case which was transparent in all its circumstances, and never for a moment indecisive as regarded the medical symptoms. The poor young lady was transferred to the establishment for lunatics at Hoxton. She soon recovered, we believe; but her relapses were as sudden as her recoveries, and she continued through life to revisit, for periods of uncertain seclusion, that house of wo. This calamity of his fireside, followed soon after by the death of his father, who had for some time been in a state of imbecility, determined the future destiny of Lamb. Apprehending, with the perfect grief of perfect love, that his sister's fate was sealed for life—viewing her as his own greatest benefactress, which she really *had* been through her advantage by ten years of age—yielding with impassioned readiness to the depth of his fraternal affection, what at any rate he would have yielded to the sanctities of duty as interpreted by his own conscience—he resolved for ever to resign all thoughts of marriage with a young lady whom he loved, for ever to abandon all ambitious prospects that might have tempted him into uncertainties, humbly to content himself with the *certainties* of his Indian clerkship, to dedicate himself for the future to the care of his desolate and prostrate sister, and to leave the rest to God. These sacrifices he made in no hurry or tumult, but deliberately, and in religious tranquillity. These sacrifices were accepted in heaven; and even on this earth they *had* their reward. She, for whom he gave up all, in turn gave up all for *him*. She devoted herself to his comfort. Many times she returned to the lunatic establishment, but many times she was restored to illuminate the household hearth for *him*; and of the happiness which for forty years and more he had, no hour seemed true that was not derived from *her*. Henceforward, therefore, until he was emancipated by the noble generosity of

the East India Directors, Lamb's time, for nine-and-twenty years, was given to the India House.

"*O fortunati nimium, sua si bona nôrint*," is applicable to more people than "*agricolæ*." Clerks of the India House are as blind to their own advantages as the blindest of ploughmen. Lamb was summoned, it is true, through the larger and more genial section of his life, to the drudgery of a copying clerk—making confidential entries into mighty folios, on the subject of calicoes and muslins. By this means, whether he would or not, he became gradually the author of a great "serial" work, in a frightful number of volumes, on as dry a department of literature as the children of the great desert could have suggested. Nobody, he must have felt, was ever likely to study this great work of his, not even Dr. Dryasdust. He had written in vain, which is not pleasant to know. There would be no second edition called for by a discerning public in Leadenhall Street; not a chance of *that*. And consequently the *opera omnia* of Lamb, drawn up in a hideous battalion, at the cost of labour so enormous, would be known only to certain families of spiders in one generation, and of rats in the next. Such a labour of Sisyphus,—the rolling up a ponderous stone to the summit of a hill only that it might roll back again by the gravitation of its own dulness,—seems a bad employment for a man of genius in his meridian energies. And yet, perhaps not. Perhaps the collective wisdom of Europe could not have devised for Lamb a more favourable condition of toil than this very India House clerkship. His works (his Leadenhall Street works) were certainly not read; popular they *could* not be, for they were not read by anybody; but then, to balance *that*, they were not reviewed. His folios were of that order, which (in Cowper's words) "not even critics criticise." *Is that*

nothing? Is it no happiness to escape the hands of merciless reviewers? Many of us escape being *read;* the worshipful reviewer does not find time to read a line of us; but we do not for that reason escape being criticised, "shown up," and martyred. The list of *errata* again, committed by Lamb, was probably of a magnitude to alarm any possible compositor; and yet these *errata* will never be known to mankind. They are dead and buried. They have been cut off prematurely; and for any effect upon their generation, might as well never have existed. Then the returns, in a pecuniary sense, from these folios—how important were *they!* It is not common, certainly, to write folios; but neither is it common to draw a steady income of from £300 to £400 per annum from volumes of any size. This will be admitted; but would it not have been better to draw the income without the toil? Doubtless it would always be more agreeable to have the rose without the thorn. But in the case before us, taken with all its circumstances, we deny that the toil is truly typified as a thorn; so far from being a thorn in Lamb's daily life, on the contrary, it was a second rose ingrafted upon the original rose of the income, that he had to earn it by a moderate but continued exertion. Holidays, in a national establishment so great as the India House, and in our too fervid period, naturally could not be frequent; yet all great English corporations are gracious masters, and indulgences of this nature could be obtained on a special application. Not to count upon these accidents of favour, we find that the regular toil of those in Lamb's situation began at ten in the morning, and ended as the clock struck four in the afternoon. Six hours composed the daily contribution of labour, that is precisely one-fourth part of the total day. But, as Sunday was exempted, the rigorous expression of

the quota was one-fourth of six-sevenths, which makes only six twenty-eighths and not six twenty-fourths of the total time. Less toil than this would hardly have availed to deepen the sense of value in that large part of the time still remaining disposable. Had there been any resumption whatever of labour in the evening, though but for half an hour, that one encroachment upon the broad continuous area of the eighteen free hours would have killed the tranquillity of the whole day, by *sowing* it (so to speak) with intermitting anxieties—anxieties that, like tides, would still be rising and falling. Whereas now, at the early hour of four, when daylight is yet lingering in the air, even at the dead of winter, in the latitude of London, and when the *enjoying* section of the day is barely commencing, everything is left which a man would care to retain. A mere *dilettante* or amateur student, having no mercenary interest concerned, would, upon a refinement of luxury—would, upon choice, give up so much time to study, were it only to sharpen the value of what remained for pleasure. And thus the only difference between the scheme of the India House distributing his time for Lamb, and the scheme of a wise voluptuary distributing his time for himself, lay, not in the *amount* of time deducted from enjoyment, but in the particular mode of appropriating that deduction. An *intellectual* appropriation of the time, though casually fatiguing, must have pleasures of its own; pleasures denied to a task so mechanic and so monotonous as that of reiterating endless records of sales or consignments not *essentially* varying from each other. True; it is pleasanter to pursue an intellectual study than to make entries in a ledger. But even an intellectual toil is toil; few people can support it for more than six hours in a day. And the only question, therefore, after all, is, at what period of the day a man would prefer

taking this pleasure of study. Now, upon that point, as regards the case of Lamb, there is no opening for doubt. He, amongst his *Popular Fallacies*, humorously illustrates the necessity of evening and artificial lights to the prosperity of studies. After exposing, with the perfection of fun, the savage unsociality of those elder ancestors who lived (if life it was) before lamp-light was invented, showing that "jokes came in with candles;" since "what repartees *could* have passed" when people were "grumbling at one another in the dark," and "when you must have felt about for a smile, and handled a neighbour's cheek to be sure that he understood it?"—he goes on to say, "This accounts for the seriousness of the elder poetry," viz., because they had no candle-light. Even eating he objects to as a very imperfect thing in the dark; you are not convinced that a dish tastes as it should do by the promise of its name, if you dine in the twilight without candles. Seeing is believing. "The senses absolutely give and take reciprocally." The sight guarantees the taste. For instance, "Can you tell pork from veal in the dark, or distinguish Sherries from pure Malaga?" To all enjoyments whatsoever candles are indispensable as an adjunct; but, as to *reading*, "there is," says Lamb, "absolutely no such thing but by a candle. We have tried the affectation of a book at noon-day in gardens, but it was labour thrown away. It is a mockery, all that is reported of the influential Phœbus. No true poem ever owed its birth to the sun's light. The mild internal light, that reveals the fine shapings of poetry, like fires on the domestic hearth, goes out in the sunshine. Milton's morning hymn in Paradise, we would hold a good wager, was penned at midnight; and Taylor's rich description of a sunrise smells decidedly of the taper." This view of evening and candle-light, as involved in the full

delight of literature, may seem no more than a pleasant extravaganza; and no doubt it is in the nature of such gaieties to travel a little into exaggeration; but substantially it is certain that Lamb's sincere feelings pointed habitually in the direction here indicated. His literary studies, whether taking the colour of tasks or diversions, courted the aid of evening, which, by means of physical weariness, produces a more luxurious state of repose than belongs to the labour hours of day; they courted the aid of lamp-light, which, as Lord Bacon remarked, gives a gorgeousness to human pomps and pleasures, such as would be vainly sought from the homeliness of day-light. The hours, therefore, which were withdrawn from his own control by the India House, happened to be exactly that part of the day which Lamb least valued, and could least have turned to account.

The account given of Lamb's friends, of those whom he endeavoured to love because he admired them, or to esteem intellectually because he loved them personally, is too much coloured for general acquiescence by Sergeant (since Mr. Justice) Talfourd's own early prepossessions. It is natural that an intellectual man like the Sergeant, personally made known in youth to people, whom from childhood he had regarded as powers in the ideal world, and in some instances as representing the eternities of human speculation, since their names had perhaps dawned upon his mind in concurrence with the very earliest suggestion of topics which they had treated, should overrate their intrinsic grandeur. Hazlitt accordingly is styled "The great thinker." But had he even been such potentially, there was an absolute bar to his achievement of that station in act and consummation. No man *can* be a great thinker in our days upon large and elaborate questions without being also a great student. To think profoundly, it is indispensable that a

man should have read down to his own starting-point, and have read as a collating student to the particular stage at which he himself takes up the subject. At this moment, for instance, how could geology be treated otherwise than childishly by one who should rely upon the encyclopædias of 1800? or comparative physiology by the most ingenious of men unacquainted with Marshall Hall, and with the apocalyptic glimpses of secrets unfolding under the hands of Professor Owen? In such a condition of undisciplined thinking, the ablest man thinks to no purpose. He lingers upon parts of the inquiry that have lost the importance which once they had, under imperfect charts of the subject; he wastes his strength upon problems that have become obsolete; he loses his way in paths that are not in the line of direction upon which the improved speculation is moving; or he gives narrow conjectural solutions of difficulties that have long since received sure and comprehensive ones. It is as if a man should in these days attempt to colonize, and yet, through inertia or through ignorance, should leave behind him all modern resources of chemistry, of chemical agriculture, or of steam-power. Hazlitt had read nothing. Unacquainted with Grecian philosophy, with Scholastic philosophy, and with the recomposition of these philosophies in the looms of Germany during the last seventy and odd years, trusting merely to the untrained instincts of keen mother-wit—whence should Hazlitt have had the materials for great thinking? It is through the collation of many abortive voyages to polar regions that a man gains his first chance of entering the polar basin, or of running ahead on the true line of approach to it. The very reason for Hazlitt's defect in eloquence as a lecturer, is sufficient also as a reason why he could not have been a comprehensive thinker "He

was not eloquent," says the Sergeant, "in the true sense of the term." But why? Because it seems "his thoughts were too weighty to be moved along by the shallow stream of feeling which an evening's excitement can rouse,"—an explanation which leaves us in doubt whether Hazlitt forfeited his chance of eloquence by accommodating himself to this evening's excitement, or by gloomily resisting it. Our own explanation is different, Hazlitt was not eloquent, because he was discontinuous. No man can be eloquent whose thoughts are abrupt, insulated, capricious, and (to borrow an impressive word from Coleridge) non-sequacious. Eloquence resides not in separate or fractional ideas, but in the relations of manifold ideas, and in the mode of their evolution from each other. It is not indeed enough that the ideas should be many, and their relations coherent; the main condition lies in the *key* of the evolution, in the *law* of the succession. The elements are nothing without the atmosphere that moulds, and the dynamic forces that combine. Now Hazlitt's brilliancy is seen chiefly in separate splinterings of phrase or image which throw upon the eye a vitreous scintillation for a moment, but spread no deep suffusions of colour, and distribute no masses of mighty shadow. A flash, a solitary flash, and all is gone. Rhetoric, according to its quality, stands in many degrees of relation to the permanencies of truth; and all rhetoric, like all flesh, is partly unreal, and the glory of both is fleeting. Even the mighty rhetoric of Sir Thomas Browne, or Jeremy Taylor, to whom only it has been granted to open the trumpet-stop on that great organ of passion, oftentimes leaves behind it the sense of sadness which belongs to beautiful apparitions starting out of darkness upon the morbid eye, only to be reclaimed by darkness in the instant of their birth, or which belongs to pageantries in the clouds.

But if all rhetoric is a mode of pyrotechny, and all pyrotechnics are by necessity fugitive, yet even in these frail pomps, there are many degrees of frailty. Some fireworks require an hour's duration for the expansion of their glory; others, as if formed from fulminating powder, expire in the very act of birth. Precisely on that scale of duration and of power stand the glitterings of rhetoric that are not worked into the texture, but washed on from the outside. Hazlitt's thoughts were of the same fractured and discontinuous order as his illustrative images—seldom or never self-diffusive; and *that* is a sufficient argument that he had never cultivated philosophic thinking.

Not, however, to conceal any part of the truth, we are bound to acknowledge that Lamb thought otherwise on this point, manifesting what seemed to us an extravagant admiration of Hazlitt, and perhaps even in part for that very glitter which we are denouncing—at least he did so in conversation with ourselves. But, on the other hand, as this conversation travelled a little into the tone of a disputation, and *our* frost on this point might seem to justify some undue fervour by way of balance, it is very possible that Lamb did not speak his absolute and most dispassionate judgment. And yet again, if he *did*, may we, with all reverence for Lamb's exquisite genius, have permission to say—that his own constitution of intellect sinned by this very habit of discontinuity. It was a habit of mind not unlikely to be cherished by his habits of life. Amongst these habits was the excess of his social kindness. He scorned so much to deny his company and his redundant hospitality to any man who manifested a wish for either by calling upon him, that he almost seemed to think it a criminality in himself if, by accident, he really *was* from home on your visit, rather than by possibility a negligence

in you, that had not forewarned him of your intention. What was the consequence? All his life, from this and other causes, he must have read in the spirit of one liable to sudden interruption; like a dragoon, in fact, reading with one foot in the stirrup, when expecting momentarily a summons to mount for action. In such situations, reading by snatches, and by intervals of precarious leisure, people form inevitably the habit of seeking and unduly valuing condensations of the meaning, where in reality the truth suffers by this short-hand exhibition; or else they demand too vivid illustrations of the meaning. Lord Chesterfield, so brilliant a man by nature, already therefore making a morbid estimate of brilliancy, and so hurried throughout his life as a public man, read under this double coercion for craving instantaneous effects. At one period, his only time for reading was in the morning, whilst under the hands of his hairdresser, who, in that age, or even thirty years later, was an artist that, more even than a tailor, ministered to respectability. Compelled to take the hastiest of flying shots at his author, naturally Lord Chesterfield demanded a very conspicuous mark to fire at. But the author could not, in so brief a space, be always sure to crowd any very prominent objects on the eye, unless by being audaciously oracular and peremptory as regarded the sentiment, or flashy in excess as regarded its expression. "Come now, my friend," was Lord Chesterfield's morning adjuration to his author; "come now, cut it short—don't prose—don't hum and haw." The author had doubtless no ambition to enter his name on the honourable and ancient roll of gentlemen prosers; probably he conceived himself not at all tainted with the asthmatic infirmity of humming and hawing; but, as to "cutting it short," how could he be sure of meeting his lordship's expectations in that point, unless by dismiss-

ing all the limitations that might be requisite to fit the idea for use, or the adjuncts that might be requisite to integrate its truth, or the final consequences that might involve some deep *arrière pensée.* To be lawfully and usefully brilliant, after this rapid fashion, a man must come forward as a refresher of old truths, where *his* suppressions are supplied by the reader's memory ; not as an expounder of new truths, where oftentimes a dislocated fraction of the true is not less dangerous than the false itself.

To read therefore habitually, by hurried instalments, has this bad tendency—that it is likely to found a taste for modes of composition too artificially irritating, and to disturb the equilibrium of the judgment in relation to the colourings of style. Lamb, however, whose constitution of mind was even ideally sound in reference to the natural, the simple, the genuine, might seem of all men least liable to a taint in this direction. And undoubtedly he *was* so, as regarded those modes of beauty which nature had specially qualified him for apprehending. Else, and in relation to other modes of beauty, where his sense of the true, and of its distinction from the spurious, had been an acquired sense, it is impossible for us to hide from ourselves—that not through habits only, not through stress of injurious accidents only, but by original structure and temperament of mind, Lamb had a bias towards those very defects on which rested the startling characteristics of style which we have been noticing. He himself, we fear, not bribed by indulgent feelings to another, not moved by friendship, but by native tendency, shrank from the continuous, from the sustained, from the elaborate.

The elaborate, indeed, without which much truth and beauty must perish in germ, was by name the object of his invectives. The instances are many, in his own beautiful essays, where he literally collapses, literally sinks away

from openings suddenly offering themselves to flights of pathos or solemnity in direct prosecution of his own theme. On any such summons, where an ascending impulse, and an untired pinion were required, he *refuses* himself (to use military language) invariably. The least observing reader of *Elia* cannot have failed to notice that the most felicitous passages always accomplish their circuit in a few sentences. The gyration within which his sentiment wheels, no matter of what kind it may be, is always the shortest possible. It does not prolong itself—it does not repeat itself—it does not propagate itself. But, in fact, other features in Lamb's mind would have argued this feature by analogy, had we by accident been left unaware of it directly. It is not by chance, or without a deep ground in his nature, *common* to all his qualities, both affirmative and negative, that Lamb had an insensibility to music more absolute than can have been often shared by any human creature, or perhaps than was ever before acknowledged so candidly. The sense of music—as a pleasurable sense, or as any sense at all other than of certain unmeaning and impertinent differences in respect to high and low, sharp or flat—was utterly obliterated as with a sponge by nature herself from Lamb's organization. It was a corollary, from the same large *substratum* in his nature, that Lamb had no sense of the rhythmical in prose composition. Rhythmus, or pomp of cadence, or sonorous ascent of clauses, in the structure of sentences, were effects of art as much thrown away upon *him* as the voice of the charmer upon the deaf adder. We ourselves, occupying the very station of polar opposition to that of Lamb, being as morbidly, perhaps, in the one excess as he in the other, naturally detected this omission in Lamb's nature at an early stage of our acquaintance. Not the fabled Regulus, with his eyelids torn away, and his

uncurtained eye-balls exposed to the noon-tide glare of a Carthaginian sun, could have shrieked with more anguish of recoil from torture than we from certain sentences and periods in which Lamb perceived no fault at all. *Pomp*, in our apprehension, was an idea of two categories; the *pompous* might be spurious, but it might also be genuine. It is well to love the simple—*we* love it; nor is there any opposition at all between *that* and the very glory of pomp. But, as we once put the case to Lamb, if, as a musician, as the leader of a mighty orchestra, you had this theme offered to you—"Belshazzar the king gave a great feast to a thousand of his lords"—or this, "And on a certain day, Marcus Cicero stood up, and in a set speech rendered solemn thanks to Caius Cæsar for Quintus Ligarius pardoned, and for Marcus Marcellus restored"—surely no man would deny that, in such a case, simplicity, though in a passive sense not lawfully absent, must stand aside as totally insufficient for the *positive* part. Simplicity might guide, even here, but could not furnish the power; a rudder it might be, but not an oar or a sail. This Lamb was ready to allow; as an intellectual *quiddity*, he recognised pomp in the character of a privileged thing; he was obliged to do so; for take away from great ceremonial festivals, such as the solemn rendering of thanks, the celebration of national anniversaries, the commemoration of public benefactors, &c., the element of pomp, and you take away their very meaning and life; but, whilst allowing a place for it in the rubric of the logician, it is certain that, *sensuously*, Lamb would not have sympathized with it, nor have *felt* its justification in any concrete instance. We find a difficulty in pursuing this subject, without greatly exceeding the just limits. We pause, therefore, and add only this one suggestion as partly explanatory of the case. Lamb

had the Dramatic intellect and taste, perhaps in perfection, of the Epic, he had none at all. Here, as happens sometimes to men of genius preternaturally endowed in one direction, he might be considered as almost starved. A favourite of nature, so eminent in some directions, by what right could he complain that her bounties were not indiscriminate? From this defect in his nature it arose, that, except by culture and by reflection, Lamb had no genial appreciation of Milton. The solemn planetary wheelings of the Paradise Lost were not to his taste. What he *did* comprehend, were the motions like those of lightning, the fierce angular coruscations of that wild agency which comes forward so vividly in the sudden περιπέττεια, in the revolutionary catastrophe, and in the tumultuous conflicts, through persons or through situations, of the tragic drama.

There is another vice in Mr. Hazlitt's mode of composition, viz., the habit of trite quotation, too common to have challenged much notice, were it not for these reasons: 1st, That Sergeant Talfourd speaks of it in equivocal terms, as a fault perhaps, but as a "felicitous" fault, "trailing after it a line of golden associations;" 2dly, Because sometimes it involves a dishonesty. On occasion of No. 1, we must profess our belief that a more ample explanation from the Sergeant would have left him in substantial harmony with ourselves. We cannot conceive the author of Ion, and the friend of Wordsworth, seriously to countenance that paralytic "mouth-diarrhœa" (to borrow a phrase of Coleridge's)—that *fluxe de bouche* (to borrow an earlier phrase of Archbishop Huet's) which places the reader at the mercy of a man's tritest remembrances from his most school-boy reading. To have the verbal memory infested with tags of verse and "cues" of rhyme is in itself an infirmity as vulgar and as morbid as the stable-boy's habit of

whistling slang airs upon the mere mechanical excitement of a bar or two whistled by some other blockhead in some other stable. The very stage has grown weary of ridiculing a folly, that having been long since expelled from decent society has taken refuge amongst the most imbecile of authors. Was Mr. Hazlitt, then, of that class? No; he was a man of splendid talents, and of capacity for greater things than he ever attempted, though without known pretensions of the philosophic kind ascribed to him by the Sergeant. Meantime the reason for resisting the example and practice of Hazlitt lies in this—that essentially it is at war with sincerity, the foundation of all good writing, to express one's own thoughts by another man's words. This dilemma arises. The thought is, or it is not, worthy of that emphasis which belongs to a metrical expression of it. If it is *not*, then we shall be guilty of a mere folly in pushing into strong relief that which confessedly cannot support it. If it *is*, then how incredible that a thought strongly conceived, and bearing about it the impress of one's own individuality, should naturally, and without dissimulation or falsehood, bend to another man's expression of it! Simply to back one's own view by a similar view derived from another, may be useful; a quotation that repeats one's own sentiment, but in a varied form, has the grace which belongs to the *idem in alio*, the same radical idea expressed with a difference—similarity in dissimilarity; but to throw one's own thoughts, matter, and form, through alien organs so absolutely as to make another man one's interpreter for evil and good, is either to confess a singular laxity of thinking that can so flexibly adapt itself to any casual form of words, or else to confess that sort of carelessness about the expression which draws its real origin from a sense of indifference about the things to be ex-

pressed. Utterly at war this distressing practice is with all simplicity and earnestness of writing; it argues a state of indolent ease inconsistent with the pressure and coercion of strong fermenting thoughts, before we can be at leisure for idle or chance quotations. But lastly, in reference to No. 2, we must add that the practice is sometimes dishonest. It "trails after it a line of golden associations." Yes, and the burglar, who leaves an army-tailor's after a midnight visit, trails after him perhaps a long roll of gold bullion epaulettes which may look pretty by lamp-light. But *that*, in the present condition of moral philosophy amongst the police, is accounted robbery; and to benefit too much by quotations is little less. At this moment we have in our eye a biographical work, at one time not without celebrity, which is one continued *cento* of splendid passages from other people. The natural effect from so much fine writing is, that the reader rises with the impression of having been engaged upon a most eloquent work. Meantime the whole is a series of mosaics; a tessellation made up from borrowed fragments: and first, when the reader's attention is expressly directed upon the fact, he becomes aware that the nominal author has contributed nothing more to the book than a few passages of transition or brief clauses of connexion.

In the year 1796, the main incident occurring of any importance for English literature was the publication by Southey of an epic poem. This poem, the *Joan of Arc*, was the earliest work of much pretension amongst all that Southey wrote; and by many degrees it was the worst. In the four great narrative poems of his later years, there is a combination of two striking qualities, viz., a peculiar command over the *visually* splendid, connected with a deep toned grandeur of moral pathos. Especially we find this union in the *Thalaba* and the *Roderick*; but in the *Joan*

of Arc we miss it. What splendour there is for the fancy and the eye belongs chiefly to the Vision, contributed by Coleridge, and this was subsequently withdrawn. The fault lay in Southey's political relations at that era; his sympathy with the French Revolution in its earlier stages had been boundless; in all respects it was a noble sympathy, fading only as the gorgeous colouring faded from the emblazonries of that awful event, drooping only when the promises of that golden dawn sickened under stationary eclipse. In 1796, Southey was yet under the tyranny of his own earliest fascination; in *his* eyes the Revolution had suffered a momentary blight from refluxes of panic; but blight of some kind is incident to every harvest on which human hopes are suspended. Bad auguries were also ascending from the unchaining of martial instincts. But that the Revolution, having ploughed its way through unparalleled storms, was preparing to face other storms, did but quicken the apprehensiveness of his love—did but quicken the duty of giving utterance to this love. Hence came the rapid composition of the poem, which cost less time in writing than in printing. Hence, also, came the choice of his heroine. What he needed in his central character was, a heart with a capacity for the wrath of Hebrew prophets applied to ancient abuses, and for evangelic pity applied to the sufferings of nations. This heart, with this double capacity—where should he seek it? A French heart it must be, or how should it follow with its sympathies a French movement? *There* lay Southey's reason for adopting the Maid of Orleans as the depositary of hopes and aspirations on behalf of France as fervid as his own. In choosing this heroine, so inadequately known at that time, Southey testified at least his own nobility of feeling; *

* It is right to remind the reader of this, for a reason applying forcibly to the present moment. Michelet has taxed Englishmen with

but in executing his choice, he and his friends overlooked two faults fatal to his purpose. One was this: sympathy with the French Revolution meant sympathy with the opening prospects of man—meant sympathy with the Pariah of every clime—with all that suffered social wrong, or saddened in hopeless bondage.

That was the movement at work in the French Revolution. But the movement of Joanne d'Arc took a different direction. In *her* day also, it is true, the human heart had yearned after the same vast enfranchisement for the children of labour as afterwards worked in the great vision of the French Revolution. In *her* days also, and shortly before them, the human hand had sought by bloody acts to realize this dream of the heart. And in her childhood, Joanna had not been insensible to these premature motions upon a path too bloody and too dark to be safe. But this view of human misery had been utterly absorbed to *her* by the special misery then desolating France. The lilies of France

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yielding to national animosities in the case of Joan, having no plea whatever for that insinuation but the single one drawn from Shakspeare's Henry VI. To this the answers are as follow:—First, That Shakspeare's share in that trilogy is not nicely ascertained; not *so* nicely as to warrant the founding upon it of any solemn accusation. Secondly, That M. Michelet forgot (or which is far worse, *not* forgetting it, he dissembled) the fact, that in undertaking a series of dramas upon the basis avowedly of national chronicles, and for the very purpose of profiting by old traditionary recollections connected with ancestral glories, it was mere lunacy to recast the circumstances at the bidding of antiquarian research, so as entirely to disturb these popular traditions. Besides that, to Shakspeare's age no such spirit of research had blossomed. Writing for the stage, a man would have risked lapidation by uttering a whisper in that direction. And, even if not, what sense could there have been in openly running counter to the very motive that had originally prompted that particular choice of chronicle plays? Thirdly, If one Englishman had, in a memorable situation, adopted the popular view of Joan's conduct (*popular* as much in France as in England); on the other hand, fifty years before

had been trampled under foot by the conquering stranger. Within fifty years, in three pitched battles that resounded to the ends of the earth, the chivalry of France had been exterminated. Her oriflamme had been dragged through the dust. The eldest son of Baptism had been prostrated. The daughter of France had been surrendered on coercion as a bride to her English conqueror. The child of that marriage, a marriage so ignominious to the land, was King of France by the consent of Christendom; that child's uncle domineered as regent of France; and that child's armies were in military possession of the land. But were they undisputed masters? No; and *there* precisely lay the sorrow of the time. Under a perfect conquest there would have been repose; whereas the presence of the English armies did but furnish a plea, masking itself in patriotism, for gatherings everywhere of lawless marauders; of soldiers that had deserted their banners; and of robbers by profession. This was the wo of France more even than the military dishonour. That dishonour had been palliated

M. Michelet was writing this flagrant injustice, another Englishman (viz., Southey) had, in an epic poem, reversed this mis-judgment, and invested the shepherd girl with a glory nowhere else accorded to her, not even by Schiller. Fourthly, We are not entitled to view as an *attack* upon Joanna, what, in the worst construction, is but an unexamining adoption of the contemporary historical accounts. A poet or a dramatist is not responsible for the accuracy of chronicles. But that, which *is* an attack upon Joan, being briefly the foulest and obscenest attempt ever made to stifle the grandeur of a great human struggle, viz., the French burlesque poem of *La Pucelle*—what memorable man was it that wrote *that?* Was he a Frenchman, or was he not? was his name Voltaire, Arouet de Voltaire, or was it not? That M. Michelet should *pretend* to have forgotten this vilest of pasquinades, is more shocking to the general sense of justice than any special untruth as to Shakspeare *can* be to the particular nationality of an Englishman.

from the first by the genealogical pretensions of the English royal family to the French throne, and these pretensions were strengthened in the person of the present claimant. But the military desolation of France, this it was that woke the faith of Joanna in her own heavenly mission of deliverance. It was the attitude of her prostrate country, crying night and day for purification from blood, and not from feudal oppression, that swallowed up the thoughts of the impassioned girl. But *that* was not the cry that uttered itself afterwards in the French Revolution. In Joanna's days, the first step towards rest for France was by expulsion of the foreigner. Independence of a foreign yoke, liberation as between people and people, was the one ransom to be paid for French honour and peace. *That* debt settled, there might come a time for thinking of civil liberties. But this time was not within the prospects of the poor shepherdess. The field—the area of her sympathies never coincided with that of the revolutionary period. It followed, therefore, that Southey *could* not have raised Joanna (with her condition of feeling), by any management, into the interpreter of his own. *That* was the first error in his poem, and it was irremediable. The second was—and strangely enough this also escaped notice—that the heroine of Southey is made to close her career precisely at the point when its grandeur commences. She believed herself to have a mission for the deliverance of France; and the great instrument which she was authorized to use towards this end, was the king, Charles VII. Him she was to crown. With this coronation, her triumph, in the plain historical sense, ended. And *there* ends Southey's poem. But exactly at this point, the grander stage of her mission commences, viz., the ransom which she, a solitary girl, paid in her own person for the national deliverance. The grander

half of the story was thus sacrificed, as being irrelevant to Southey's political object; and yet, after all, the half which he retained did not at all symbolize that object. It is singular, indeed, to find a long poem, on an ancient subject, adapting itself hieroglyphically to a modern purpose; 2dly, to find it failing of this purpose; and 3dly, if it had *not* failed, so planned that it could have succeeded only by a sacrifice of all that was grandest in the theme.

To these capital oversights, Southey, Coleridge, and Lamb, were all joint parties; the two first as concerned in the composition, the last as a frank though friendly reviewer of it in his private correspondence with Coleridge. It is, however, some palliation of these oversights, and a very singular fact in itself, that neither from English authorities nor from French, though the two nations were equally brought into close connexion with the career of that extraordinary girl, could any adequate view be obtained of her character and acts. The *official* records of her trial, apart from which nothing can be depended upon, were first in the course of publication from the Paris press during the currency of last* year. First in 1847, about four hundred and sixteen years after her ashes had been dispersed to the winds, could it be seen distinctly, through the clouds of fierce partisanships and national prejudices, what had been the frenzy of the persecution against her, and the utter desolation of her position; what had been the grandeur of her conscientious resistance.

Anxious that our readers should see Lamb from as many angles as possible, we have obtained from an old friend of his a memorial—slight, but such as the circumstances allowed—of an evening spent with Charles and Mary

* "Last year"—This was written in 1848.

Lamb, in the winter of 1821-22. The record is of the most unambitious character; it pretends to nothing, as the reader will see, not so much as to a pun, which it really required some singularity of luck to have missed from Charles Lamb, who often continued to fire puns, as minute guns, all through the evening. But the more unpretending this record is, the more appropriate it becomes by that very fact to the memory of *him* who, amongst all authors, was the humblest and least pretending. We have often thought that the famous epitaph written for his own grave by Piron, the cynical author of *La Métromanie*, might have come from Lamb, were it not for one objection; Lamb's benign heart would have recoiled from a sarcasm, however effective, inscribed upon a grave-stone; or from a jest, however playful, that tended to a vindictive sneer amongst his own farewell words. We once translated this Piron epitaph into a kind of rambling Drayton couplet; and the only point needing explanation is, that, from the accident of scientific men, Fellows of the Royal Society being usually very solemn men, with an extra chance, therefore, for being, or for seeming, dull men in conversation, naturally it arose that some wit among our great-grandfathers translated F. R. S. into a short-hand expression for a Fellow Remarkably Stupid; to which version of the three letters our English epitaph alludes. The French original of Piron is this :—

> " Ci git Piron ; qui ne fut rien ;
> Pas même académicien."

The bitter arrow of the second line was feathered to hit the French Académie, who had declined to elect him a member. The English version is this :—

> " Here lies Piron ; who was—nothing; or, if *that* could be, was less:
> How !—nothing? Yes, nothing; not so much as F. R. S."

But now to our friend's memorandum :—

October 6, 1848.

My dear X.—You ask me for some memorial, however trivial, of any dinner party, supper party, water party, no matter what, that I can circumstantially recall to recollection, by any features whatever, puns or repartees, wisdom or wit, connecting it with Charles Lamb. I grieve to say that my meetings of *any* sort with Lamb were few, though spread through a score of years. That sounds odd for one that loved Lamb so entirely, and so much venerated his character. But the reason was, that I so seldom visited London, and Lamb so seldom quitted it. Somewhere about 1810 and 1812 I must have met Lamb repeatedly at the *Courier Office* in the Strand; that is, at Coleridge's, to whom, as an intimate friend, Mr. Daniel Stewart (a proprietor of the paper) gave up for a time the use of some rooms in the office. Thither, in the London season (May especially and June), resorted Lamb, Godwin, Sir H. Davy, and, once or twice, Wordsworth, who visited Sir George Beaumont's Leicestershire residence of Coleorton early in the spring, and then travelled up to Grosvenor Square with Sir George and Lady Beaumont; "*spectatum veniens, veniens spectetur ut ipse.*"

But in these miscellaneous gatherings, Lamb said little, except when an opening arose for a pun. And how effectual that sort of small shot was from *him*, I need not say to anybody who remembers his infirmity of stammering, and his dexterous management of it for purposes of light and shade. He was often able to train the roll of stammers into settling upon the words immediately preceding the effective one; by which means the key-note of the jest or sarcasm, benefiting by the sudden liberation of his embar-

good voice, was delivered with the force of a pistol shot. That stammer was worth an annuity to him as an ally of his wit. Firing under cover of that advantage, he did triple execution; for, in the first place, the distressing sympathy of the hearers with *his* distress of utterance won for him unavoidably the silence of deep attention; and then, whilst he had us all hoaxed into this attitude of mute suspense by an appearance of distress that he perhaps did not really feel, down came a plunging shot into the very thick of us, with ten times the effect it would else have had. If his stammering, however, often did him true "yeoman's service," sometimes it led him into scrapes. Coleridge told me of a ludicrous embarrassment which it caused him at Hastings. Lamb had been medically advised to a course of sea-bathing; and, accordingly, at the door of his bathing-machine, whilst he stood shivering with cold, two stout fellows laid hold of him, one at each shoulder, like heraldic supporters; they waited for the word of command from their principal, who began the following oration to them: "Hear me, men! Take notice of this—I am to be dipped. But—" What more he would have said is unknown to land or sea: for having reached the word dipped, he commenced such a rolling fire of Di—di—di—di, that when at length he descended *à plomb* upon the full word *dipped*, the two men, tired of the long suspense, became satisfied that they reached what lawyers call the "operative clause" of the sentence; and both exclaiming, "Oh yes, sir, we're quite aware of *that*," down they plunged him into the sea. On emerging, Lamb sobbed so much from the cold, that he found no voice suitable to his indignation; from necessity he seemed tranquil; and again addressing the men, who stood respectfully listening, he began thus: "Men! is it possible

to obtain your attention?" "Oh, surely, sir, by all means." "Then listen: once more I tell you, I am to be di—di—di—" and then, with a burst of indignation, "dipped, I tell you." "Oh, decidedly, sir," rejoined the men, "decidedly," and down the stammerer went for the second time. Petrified with cold and wrath, for a third time Lamb made a feeble attempt at explanation—"Grant me pa—pa—patience; is it mun—un—murder you me—me—mean? Again and a—ga—ga—gain, I tell you, I am to be di—di—di—dipped," now speaking furiously, with the voice of an injured man. "Oh, yes, sir," the men replied, "we know that, we fully understood it," and for the third time down went Lamb into the sea. "O limbs of Satan!" he said, on coming up for the third time; "it's now too late; I tell you that I am—no that I *was*—by medical direction—to be di—di—di—dipped only *once*."

Since the rencontres with Lamb at Coleridge's, I had met him once or twice at literary dinner-parties. One of these occurred at the house of Messrs. Taylor and Hessey, the publishers. I myself was suffering too much from illness at the time to take any pleasure in what passed, or to notice it with any vigilance of attention. Lamb, I remember, as usual, was full of gaiety; and as usual he rose too rapidly to the zenith of his gaiety; for he shot upwards like a rocket, and, as usual, people said he was "tipsy." To me, Lamb never seemed intoxicated, but at most joyously elevated. He never talked nonsense, which is a great point gained: nor polemically, which is a greater; for it is a dreadful thing to find a drunken man bent upon converting one's-self; nor sentimentally, which is greatest of all. You can stand a man's fraternizing with you; or, if he swears an eternal friendship, only once in an hour,

you do not think of calling the police; but once in every three minutes is too much. Lamb did none of these things; he was always rational, quiet, and gentlemanly in his habits. Nothing memorable, I am sure, passed upon this occasion, which was in November of 1821; and yet the dinner was memorable by means of one fact not discovered until some years later. Amongst the company, all literary men, sat a murderer, such he proved to be upon later discoveries, but even then looking prospectively towards that object, and a murderer of a freezing class; cool, calculating, wholesale in his operations, and moving all along under the advantages of unsuspecting confidence and domestic opportunities. This was Mr. Wainwright, who was subsequently brought to trial, but not for any of his murders, and transported for life. The story has been told both by Judge Talfourd, and previously by Sir Edward B. Lytton. Both have been much blamed for the use made of this extraordinary case; but I know not why. In itself it is a most remarkable case; for more reasons than one. It is remarkable for the appalling revelation which it makes of power spread through the hands of people not liable to suspicion, for purposes the most dreadful. It is remarkable also by the contrast which existed in this case between the murderer's dandy appearance, and the terrific purposes with which he was always dallying. He was a contributor to a journal in which I also had written several papers. This formed a shadowy link between us; and, ill as I was, I looked more attentively at *him* than at anybody else. Yet there were several men of wit and genius present, amongst whom Lamb (as I have said) and Thomas Hood, Hamilton Reynolds and Allan Cunningham. But *them* I already knew, whereas Mr. W. I now saw for the first time and the last. What interested me about

him was this, the papers which had been pointed out to me as his (signed *Janus Weathercock* or else *Vinkbooms*), were written in a spirit of coxcombry that did not so much disgust as amuse. The writer could not conceal the ostentatious pleasure which he took in the luxurious fittings-up of his rooms, in the fancied splendour of his *bijouterie*, &c. Yet it was easy for a man of any experience to read two facts in all this idle *étalage;* one being, that his finery was but of a second-rate order; the other, that he was a *parvenu*, not at home even amongst his second-rate splendour. So far there was nothing to distinguish Mr. W.'s papers from the papers of other triflers. But in this point there *was*, viz., that in his judgments upon the great Italian masters of painting, Da Vinci, Titian, &c., there seemed a tone of sincerity and of native sensibility, as in one who spoke for himself, and was not merely a copier from books. This it was that interested me; as also his reviews of the chief Italian engravers, Morghen, Volpato, &c.; not for the manner, which overflowed with levities and impertinence, but for the substance of his judgments in those cases where I happened to have had an opportunity of judging for myself. Here arose also a claim upon Lamb's attention: for Lamb and his sister having no sensibility for music, had the deepest for painting. Accordingly Lamb paid him a great deal of attention, and continued to speak of him for years with an interest that seemed disproportioned to his pretensions. This might be owing in part to an indirect compliment to Miss Lamb in one of W.'s papers; else his appearance would rather have repelled Lamb; it was commonplace, and better suited to express the dandyism which overspread the surface of his manner, than the unaffected sensibility which apparently lay in his nature. Dandy or not, however, this

man, on account of the schism in his papers, so much amiable puppyism on one side, so much deep feeling on the other (feeling, applied to some of the grandest objects that earth has to show), did really move a trifle of interest in me, on a day when I hated the face of man and woman. Yet again, if I had known this man for the murderer that even then he was, what sudden loss of interest, what sudden growth of another interest, would have changed the face of the scene! Trivial creature, that didst carry thy dreadful eye kindling with perpetual treasons!—dreadful creature, that didst carry thy trivial eye, mantling with eternal levity, over the sleeping surfaces of confiding household life,—oh, what a revolution for man wouldst thou have founded, had thy deep wickedness prospered! What *was* that wickedness? Here is its outline; but his murders were more than were ever made known judicially.

At this time (October 1848*) the whole British island is appalled by a new chapter in the history of poisoning. Locusta in ancient Rome, Madame Brinvilliers in Paris, were people of original genius: not in any new artifice of toxicology; but in profiting by domestic openings for murder, unsuspected through their very atrocity. Such an opening was made some years ago by those who saw the possibility of founding purses for parents upon the murder of their children. This was done upon a larger scale than had been suspected, and upon a plausible pretence. To bury a corpse is costly; but of a hundred children, only a few, in the ordinary course of mortality, will die within a given time. Five shillings a piece will produce £25 annually, and *that*

* This was written ten years ago; and doubtless I had ground sufficient for what I then said. At present, however. I have entirely forgotten the particular case alluded to, unless (as I rather believe) it was a case of infant funerals with a view to the insurance-money.

will bury a considerable number. On this principle arose Infant Burial Societies. For a few shillings annually, a parent could secure a funeral for every child. If the child died, a few guineas fell due to the parent, and the funeral was accomplished without cost of *his*. But on this arose the suggestion—Why not execute an insurance of this nature twenty times over? One single insurance pays for the funeral—the other nineteen are so much clear gain, a *lucro ponatur*, for the parents. Yes; but on the supposition that the child dies! twenty are no better than one, unless they are gathered into the garner. Now, if the child died naturally, all was right; but how, if the child did *not* die? Why, clearly this,—the child that *can* die, and won't die, may be made to die. There are many ways of doing that; and it is shocking to know, that, according to recent discoveries, poison is comparatively a very merciful mode of murder. Six years ago a dreadful communication was made to the public by a medical man, viz., that three thousand children were annually burned to death under circumstances showing too clearly that they had been left by their mothers with the means and the temptations to set themselves on fire in her absence. But more shocking, because more lingering, are the deaths by artificial appliances of wet, cold, hunger, bad diet, and disturbed sleep, to the frail constitutions of children. By that machinery it is, and not by poison, that the majority qualify themselves for claiming the funeral allowances. Here, however, there occur to any man, on reflection, two eventual restraints on the extension of this domestic curse:—1st, As there is no pretext for wanting more than one funeral on account of one child, any insurances beyond one are in themselves a ground of suspicion. Now, if any plan were devised for securing the *publication* of such insurances, the suspicions

would travel as fast as the grounds for them. 2dly, It occurs, that eventually the evil checks itself, since a society established on the ordinary rates of mortality would be ruined when a murderous stimulation was applied to that rate too extensively. Still it is certain that, for a season, this atrocity *has* prospered in manufacturing districts for some years, and more recently, as judicial investigations have shown, in one agricultural district of Essex. Now, Mr. W.'s scheme of murder was, in its outline, the very same, but not applied to the narrow purpose of obtaining burials from a public fund. He persuaded, for instance, two beautiful young ladies, visitors in his family, and nearly related to his wife, to insure their lives for a short period of two years. This insurance was repeated in several different offices, until a sum of £18,000 had been secured in the event of their deaths within the two years. Mr. W. took care that they *should* die, and very suddenly, within that period. I never saw either of the young women myself; but I have been assured that one of them at least was memorably distinguished by her personal attractions. In the middle of the day which Mr. Wainwright had fixed for their murder, he framed a pretence for drawing his wife out of doors upon a very long walk. His fear was that *she* might have penetration enough to notice and report the agonizing spasms caused by the poison, whereas two young servant girls, totally inexperienced, were easily persuaded to believe it a case of cholera. On returning, after a three hours' walk, Mr. and Mrs. W. found the two young ladies dead. Having previously secured from his victims an assignment to himself of their claim, he endeavoured to make this assignment available. But the offices, which had vainly endeavoured to extract from the young ladies any satisfactory account of the reasons

for this limited insurance, had their suspicions at last strongly roused. One office had recently experienced a case of the same nature, in which also the young lady had been poisoned by the man in whose behalf she had effected the insurance; all the offices declined to pay; actions at law arose; in the course of the investigation which followed, Mr. W.'s character was fully exposed. Finally, in the midst of the embarrassments which ensued, he committed forgery, and was transported.

From this Mr. W., some few days afterwards, I received an invitation to a dinner party, expressed in terms that were obligingly earnest. He mentioned the names of his principal guests, and amongst them rested most upon those of Lamb and Sir David Wilkie. From an accident I was unable to attend, and greatly regretted it. Sir David one might rarely happen to see, except at a crowded party. But as regarded Lamb, I was sure to see him or to hear of him again in some way or other within a short time. This opportunity, in fact, offered itself within a month through the kindness of the Lambs themselves. They had heard of my being in solitary lodgings, and insisted on my coming to dine with them, which more than once I did in the winter of 1821-22.

The mere reception by the Lambs was so full of goodness and hospitable feeling, that it kindled animation in the most cheerless or torpid of invalids. I cannot imagine that any *memorabilia* occurred during the visit; but I will use the time that would else be lost upon the settling of that point, in putting down any triviality that occurs to my recollection.

There were no strangers; Charles Lamb, his sister, and myself made up the party. Even this was done in kindness. They knew that I should have been oppressed by

an effort such as must be made in the society of strangers; and they placed me by their own fireside, where I could say as much or as little as I pleased.

We dined about five o'clock, and it was one of the hospitalities inevitable to the Lambs, that any game which they might receive from rural friends in the course of the week, was reserved for the day of a friend's dining with them.

In regard to wine, Lamb and myself had the same habit—perhaps it rose to the dignity of a principle—viz., to take a great deal *during* dinner—none *after* it. Consequently, as Miss Lamb (who drank only water) retired almost with the dinner itself, nothing remained for men of our principles, the rigour of which we had illustrated by taking rather too much of old port before the cloth was drawn, except talking; amœbæan colloquy, or, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, a dialogue of "brisk reciprocation." But this was impossible; over Lamb, at this period of his life, there passed regularly, after taking wine, a brief eclipse of sleep. It descended upon him as softly as a shadow. In a gross person, laden with superfluous flesh, and sleeping heavily, this would have been disagreeable; but in Lamb, thin even to meagreness, spare and wiry as an Arab of the desert, or as Thomas Aquinas, wasted by scholastic vigils, the affection of sleep seemed rather a network of aërial gossamer than of earthly cobweb—more like a golden haze falling upon him gently from the heavens than a cloud exhaling upwards from the flesh. Motionless in his chair as a bust, breathing so gently as scarcely to seem certainly alive, he presented the image of repose midway between life and death, like the repose of sculpture; and to one who knew his history, a repose affectingly contrasting with the calamities and internal storms of his life. I have heard more

persons than I can now distinctly recall, observe of Lamb when sleeping, that his countenance in that state assumed an expression almost seraphic, from its intellectual beauty of outline, its child-like simplicity, and its benignity. It could not be called a transfiguration that sleep had worked in his face ; for the features wore essentially the same expression when waking ; but sleep spiritualized that expression, exalted it, and also harmonized it. Much of the change lay in that last process. The eyes it was that disturbed the unity of effect in Lamb's waking face. They gave a restlessness to the character of his intellect, shifting, like northern lights, through every mode of combination with fantastic playfulness, and sometimes by fiery gleams obliterating for the moment that pure light of benignity which was the predominant reading on his features. Some people have supposed that Lamb had Jewish blood in his veins, which seemed to account for his gleaming eyes. It might be so , but this notion found little countenance in Lamb's own way of treating the gloomy mediaeval traditions propagated throughout Europe about the Jews, and their secret enmity to Christian races. Lamb, indeed, might not be more serious than Shakspeare is supposed to have been in his Shylock , yet he spoke at times as from a station of wilful bigotry, and seemed (whether laughingly or not) to sympathize with the barbarous Christian superstitions upon the pretended bloody practices of the Jews, and of the early Jewish physicians. Being himself a Lincoln man, he treated Sir Hugh * of Lincoln, the young child that suffered death by secret assassination in the Jewish quarter rather than suppress his daily anthems to the Virgin, as a true histo-

* The story which furnishes a basis to the fine ballad in Percy's Reliques, and to the Canterbury Tale of Chaucer's Lady Abbess.

rical personage on the rolls of martyrdom; careless that this fable, like that of the apprentice murdered out of jealousy by his master, the architect, had destroyed its own authority by ubiquitous diffusion. All over Europe the same legend of the murdered apprentice and the martyred child reappears under different names—so that in effect the verification of the tale is none at all, because it is unanimous; is too narrow, because it is too impossibly broad. Lamb, however, though it was often hard to say whether he were not secretly laughing, swore to the truth of all these old fables, and treated the liberalities of the present generation on such points as mere fantastic and effeminate affectations, which, no doubt, they often are as regards the sincerity of those who profess them. The bigotry, which it pleased his fancy to assume, he used like a sword against the Jew, as the official weapon of the Christian, upon the same principle that a Capulet would have drawn upon a Montague, without conceiving it any duty of *his* to rip up the grounds of so ancient a quarrel; it was a feud handed down to him by his ancestors, and it was *their* business to see that originally it had been an honest feud. I cannot yet believe that Lamb, if seriously aware of any family interconnexion with Jewish blood, would, even in jest, have held that one-sided language. More probable it is, that the fiery eye recorded not any alliance with Jewish blood, but that disastrous alliance with insanity which tainted his own life, and laid desolate his sister's.

The mercurialities of Lamb were infinite, and always uttered in a spirit of absolute recklessness for the quality or the prosperity of the sally. It seemed to liberate his spirits from some burthen of blackest melancholy which oppressed it, when he had thrown off a jest: he would not stop one instant to improve it; nor did he care the value

of a straw whether it were good enough to be remembered, or so mediocre as to extort high moral indignation from a collector who refused to receive into his collection of jests and puns any that were not felicitously good or revoltingly bad.

After tea, Lamb read to me a number of beautiful compositions, which he had himself taken the trouble to copy out into a blank paper folio from unsuccessful authors. Neglected people in every class won the sympathy of Lamb. One of the poems, I remember, was a very beautiful sonnet from a volume recently published by Lord Thurlow—which, and Lamb's just remarks upon which, I could almost repeat *verbatim* at this moment, nearly twenty-seven years later, if your limits would allow me. But these, you tell me, allow of no such thing; at the utmost they allow only twelve lines more. Now all the world knows that the sonnet itself would require fourteen lines; but take fourteen from twelve and there remains very little, I fear; besides which, I am afraid two of my twelve are already exhausted. This forces me to interrupt my account of Lamb's reading, by reporting the very accident that *did* interrupt it in fact; since that no less characteristically expressed Lamb's peculiar spirit of kindness (always quickening itself towards the ill-used or the down-trodden) than it had previously expressed itself in his choice of obscure readings. Two ladies came in, one of whom at least had sunk in the scale of worldly consideration. They were ladies who would not have found much recreation in literary discussions; elderly, and habitually depressed. On *their* account, Lamb proposed whist, and in that kind effort to amuse *them*, which naturally drew forth some momentary gaieties from himself, but not of a kind to impress themselves on the recollection, the evening terminated.

Of Lamb's writings, some were confessedly failures, and some were so memorably beautiful as to be uniques in their class. The character of Lamb it is, and the life-struggle of Lamb, that must fix the attention of many, even amongst those wanting in sensibility to his intellectual merits. This character and this struggle, as we have already observed, impress many traces of themselves upon Lamb's writings. Even in that view, therefore, they have a ministerial value; but separately, for themselves, they have an independent value of the highest order. Upon this point we gladly adopt the eloquent words of Sergeant Talfourd :—

"The sweetness of Lamb's character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers ; but its heroic aspect was unguessed even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits? It was not merely that he saw, through the ensanguined cloud of misfortune which had fallen upon his family, the unstained excellence of his sister, whose madness had caused it ; that he was ready to take her to his own home with reverential affection, and cherish her through life ; and he gave up, for *her* sake, all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it ; not even that he did all this cheerfully, without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as some uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining ; but that he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course to his last. So far from thinking that his sacrifice of youth and love to his sister gave him a license to follow his own caprice at the expense of her feelings, even in the lightest matters, he always wrote and spoke of

her as his wiser self, his generous benefactress, of whose protecting care he was scarcely worthy."

It must be remembered also, which the Sergeant does not overlook, that Lamb's efforts for the becoming support of his sister lasted through a period of forty years. Twelve years before his death, the munificence of the India House, by granting him a liberal retiring allowance, had placed his own support under shelter from accidents of any kind. But this died with himself; and he could not venture to suppose that, in the event of his own death, the India House would grant to his sister the same allowance as by custom is granted to a wife. This, however, they did; but Lamb not venturing to calculate upon such nobility of patronage, had applied himself through life to the saving of a provision for his sister under any accident to himself. And this he did with a persevering prudence, but little known in the literary class, amongst a continued tenor of generosities, often so princely as to be scarcely known in any class.

Was this man, so memorably good by life-long sacrifice of himself, in any profound sense a Christian? The impression is, that he was *not*. We, from private communications with him, can undertake to say that, according to his knowledge and opportunities for the study of Christianity, he *was*. What has injured Lamb on this point is, that his early opinions (which, however, from the first were united with the deepest piety) are read by the inattentive, as if they had been the opinions of his mature days; secondly, that he had few religious persons amongst his friends, which made him reserved in the expression of his own views; thirdly, that in any case where he altered opinions for the better, the credit of the improvement is assigned to Coleridge. Lamb, for example, beginning life

as a Unitarian, in not many years became a Trinitarian. Coleridge passed through the same changes in the same order; and here, at least, Lamb is supposed simply to have obeyed the influence, confessedly great, of Coleridge. This, on our own knowledge of Lamb's views, we pronounce to be an error. And the following extracts from Lamb's letters will show, not only that he was religiously disposed on impulses self-derived, but that, so far from obeying the bias of Coleridge, he ventured, on this one subject, firmly as regarded the matter, though humbly as regarded the manner, affectionately to reprove Coleridge.

In a letter to Coleridge, written in 1797, the year after his sister's first attack of lunacy, he says :—"Coleridge, I have not one truly elevated character among my acquaintance; not one Christian; not one but undervalues Christianity. Singly, what am I to do? Wesley—[have you read his life?]—was not he an elevated character? Wesley has said religion was not a solitary thing. Alas! it is necessarily so with me, or next to solitary. 'Tis true you write to me; but correspondence by letter and personal intimacy are widely different. Do, do write to me; and do some good to my mind—already how much 'warped and relaxed' by the world!"

In a letter written about three months previously, he had not scrupled to blame Coleridge at some length for audacities of religious speculation, which seemed to him at war with the simplicities of pure religion. He says :—"Do continue to write to me. I read your letters with my sister, and they give us both abundance of delight. Especially they please us two when you talk in a religious strain. Not but we are offended occasionally with a certain freedom of expression, a certain air of mysticism,

more consonant to the conceits of pagan philosophy than consistent with the humility of genuine piety."

Then, after some instances of what he blames, he says. —"Be not angry with me, Coleridge. I wish not to cavil; I know I cannot instruct you; I only wish to remind you of that humility which best becometh the Christian character. God, in the New Testament, our best guide, is represented to us in the kind, condescending, amiable, familiar light of a parent; and, in my poor mind, 'tis best for us so to consider him as our heavenly Father, and our best friend, without indulging too bold conceptions of his character."

About a month later, he says:—"Few but laugh at me for reading my Testament. They talk a language I understand not; I conceal sentiments that would be a puzzle to *them*."

We see by this last quotation *where* it was that Lamb originally sought for consolation. We personally can vouch that, at a maturer period, when he was approaching his fiftieth year, no change had affected his opinions upon that point; and, on the other hand, that no changes had occurred in his needs for consolation, we see, alas! in the records of his life. We do not undertake to say, that in his knowledge of Christianity he was everywhere profound or consistent, but he was always earnest in his aspirations after its spiritualities, and had an apprehensive sense of its power.

Charles Lamb is gone; his life was a continued struggle in the service of love the purest, and within a sphere visited by little of contemporary applause. Even his intellectual displays won but a narrow sympathy at any time, and in his earlier period were saluted with positive derision and contumely on the few occasions when they were not op

pressed by entire neglect. But slowly all things right themselves. All merit, which is founded in truth, and is strong enough, reaches by sweet exhalations in the end a higher sensory; reaches higher organs of discernment, lodged in a selecter audience. But the original obtuseness or vulgarity of feeling that thwarted all just estimation of Lamb in life, will continue to thwart its popular diffusion. There are even some that continue to regard him with the old hostility, and the old unmitigated scorn. And we, therefore, standing by the side of Lamb's grave, seemed to hear, on one side (but in abated tones), strains of the ancient malice—"This man, that thought himself to be somebody, is dead—is buried—is forgotten!" and, on the other side, seemed to hear ascending as with the solemnity of a saintly requiem—"This man, that thought himself to be nobody, is dead—is buried; his life has been searched; and his memory is hallowed for ever!"

PHILOSOPHY OF HERODOTUS.

Few, even amongst literary people, are aware of the true place occupied, *de facto* or *de jure*, by Herodotus in universal literature ; secondly, scarce here and there a scholar up and down a century is led to reflect upon the *multiplicity* of his relations to the whole range of civilisation. We endeavour in these words to catch, as in a net, the gross prominent faults of his appreciation ; on which account, first, we say pointedly, *universal* literature, not Grecian—since the primary error is, to regard Herodotus merely in relation to the literature of Greece ; secondly, on which account we notice the circuit, the numerical amount, of his collisions with science—because the second and greater error is, to regard him exclusively as an historian. But now, under a juster allocation of his rank, as the general father of prose composition, Herodotus is nearly related to all literature whatsoever, modern not less than ancient ; and as the father of what may be called ethnographical geography, as a man who speculated most ably on all the *humanities* of science—that is, on all the scientific questions which naturally interest our human sensibilities in this great temple which we look up to, the pavilion of the sky, the sun, the moon, the atmosphere, with its climates and its winds ; or in this home which we inherit, the earth, with its hills and rivers—Herodotus ought least of all to be classed amongst historians : that is but a secondary title for *him* ; he de-

serves to be rated as the leader amongst philosophical polyhistors, which is the nearest designation to that of encyclopædist current in the Greek literature. And yet is not this word *encyclopædist* much lower than his ancient name—*father of history?* Doubtless it is no great distinction *at present* to be an encyclopædist, which is often but another name for bookmaker, craftsman, mechanic, journeyman, in his meanest degeneration; yet in those early days, when the timid muse of science had scarcely ventured sandal deep into waters so unfathomable, it seems to us a great thing indeed, that one solitary man should have founded an entire encyclopædia for his countrymen upon those difficult problems which challenged their primary attention, because starting forward from the very roof—the walls—the floor of that beautiful theatre which they tenanted. The habitable world, ἡ οικουμενη, was now daily becoming better known to the human race; but how? Chiefly through Herodotus. There are amusing evidences extant, of the profound ignorance in which nations the most enlightened had hitherto lived, as to all lands beyond their own and its frontier adjacencies. But within the single generation (or the single half century) previous to the birth of Herodotus, vast changes had taken place. The mere revolutions consequent upon the foundation of the Persian empire had approximated the whole world of civilisation. First came the conquest of Egypt by the second of the new emperors. This event, had it stood alone, was immeasurable in its effects for meeting curiosity, and in its immediate excitement for prompting it. It brought the whole vast chain of Persian dependencies, from the river Indus eastwards to the Nile westwards, or even through Cyrene to the gates of Carthage, under the unity of a single sceptre. The world was open. Jealous interdicts, inhospitable laws, national

hostilities, always *in procinctu*, no longer fettered the feet of the merchant, or neutralized the exploring instincts of the philosophic traveller. Next came the restoration of the Jewish people. Judea, no longer weeping by the Euphrates, was again sitting for another half millennium of divine probation under her ancient palm-tree. Next after that came the convulsions of Greece, earthquake upon earthquake; the trampling myriads of Darius, but six years before the birth of Herodotus; the river-draining millions of Xerxes in the fifth year of his wandering infancy. Whilst the swell from this great storm was yet angry, and hardly subsiding (a metaphor used by Herodotus himself, *ετι οιδεοντων πρηγματων*), whilst the scars of Greece were yet raw from the Persian scimitar, her towns and temples to the east of the Corinthian isthmus smouldering ruins yet reeking from the Persian torch, the young Herodotus had wandered forth in a rapture of impassioned curiosity to see, to touch, to measure, all those great objects, whose names had been recently so rife in men's mouths. The luxurious Sardis, the nation of Babylon, the Nile, that oldest of rivers, Memphis, and Thebes the hundred-gated, that were but amongst Nile's youngest daughters, with the pyramids inscrutable as the heavens—all these he had visited. As far up the Nile as Elephantine he had *personally* pushed his inquiries; and far beyond *that*, by his obstinate questions from all men presumably equal to the answers. Tyre, even, he made a separate voyage to explore. Palestine he had trodden with Grecian feet; the mysterious Jerusalem he had visited, and had computed her proportions. Finally, as to Greece continental, though not otherwise connected with it himself than by the bond of language, and as the home of his Ionian ancestors (in which view he often calls, by the great moral name of *Hellas*, regions that geogra-

phically belong to Asia and even to Africa), he seems by mere casual notices, now prompted by an historical incident, now for the purpose of an illustrative comparison, to have known it so familiarly, that Pausanias in after ages does not describe more minutely the local features to which he had dedicated a life, than this extraordinary traveller, for whom they did but point a period or circumstantiate a parenthesis. As a geographer, often as a hydrographer—witness his soundings thirty miles off the mouths of the Nile—Herodotus was the first great parent of discovery, as between nation and nation he was the author of mutual revelation; whatsoever any one nation knew of its own little ringfence, through daily use and experience, or had received by ancestral tradition, *that* he published to all other nations. He was the first central interpreter, the common dragoman to the general college of civilisation that now belted the Mediterranean, holding up, in a language already laying the foundations of universality, one comprehensive mirror, reflecting to them all the separate chorography, habits, institutions, and religious systems of each. Nor was it in the facts merely that he retraced the portraits of all leading states; whatsoever in these facts was mysterious, for that he had a self-originated solution; whatsoever was perplexing by equiponderant counter-assumptions, for that he brought a determining impulse to the one side or the other; whatsoever seemed contradictory, for that he brought a reconciling hypothesis. Were it the annual rise of a river, were it the formation of a famous kingdom by alluvial depositions, were it the unexpected event of a battle, or the apparently capricious migration of a people—for all alike Herodotus had such resources of knowledge as took the sting out of the marvellous, or such resources of ability as at least suggested the plausible. Antiquities or mythology, martial

institutions or pastoral, the secret motives to a falsehood which he exposes, or the hidden nature of some truth which he deciphers—all alike lay within the searching dissection of this astonishing intellect, the most powerful lens by far that has ever been brought to bear upon the mixed objects of a speculative traveller.

To have classed this man as a mere fabling annalist, or even if it should be said on better thoughts—no, not as a fabling annalist, but as a great scenical-historian—is so monstrous an oversight, so mere a neglect of the proportions maintained amongst the topics treated by Herodotus, that we do not conceive any apology requisite for revising, in this place or at this time, the general estimate on a subject *always* interesting. What is everybody's business, the proverb instructs us to view as nobody's by duty; but under the same rule it is *any*body's by right; and what belongs to all hours alike, may, for that reason, belong, without blame, to January of the year 1842. Yet, if any man, obstinate in demanding for all acts a "sufficient reason" [to speak *Leibniticè*], demurs to our revision, as having no special invitation at this immediate moment, then we are happy to tell him that Mr. Hermann Bobrick has furnished us with such an invitation, by a recent review of Herodotus as a geographer,* and thus furnished even a technical plea for calling up the great man before our bar.

We have already said something towards reconsidering the thoughtless classification of a writer whose works do actually, in their major proportion, not essentially concern that subject to which, by their *translated* title, they are exclusively referred; for even that part which *is* historical,

* Geographie des Herodot—dargestellt von Hermann Bobrik. Königsberg, 1838.

often moves by mere anecdotes or personal sketches. And the uniform object of these is not the history, but the political condition of the particular state or province. But we now feel disposed to press this rectification a little more keenly, by asking—What was the reason for this apparently wilful error? The reason is palpable: it was the ignorance of irreflectiveness.

I. For with respect to the first oversight on the claim of Herodotus, as an earliest archetype of composition, so much is evident—that, if prose were simply the negation of verse, were it the fact that prose had no separate laws of its own, but that, to be a composer in prose meant only his privilege of being inartificial—his dispensation from the restraints of metre—then, indeed, it would be a slight nominal honour to have been the Father of Prose. But this is ignorance, though a pretty common ignorance. To walk well, it is not enough that a man abstains from dancing. Walking has rules of its own, the more difficult to perceive or to practise as they are less broadly *prononcés*. To forbear singing is not, therefore, to speak well or to read well: each of which offices rests upon a separate art of its own. Numerous laws of transition, connexion, preparation, are different for a writer in verse and a writer in prose. Each mode of composition is a great art; well executed, is the highest and most difficult of arts. And we are satisfied that, one century before the age of Herodotus, the effort must have been greater to wean the feelings from a key of poetic composition to which all minds had long been attuned and prepared, than at present it would be for any paragraphist in the newspapers to make the inverse revolution by *suddenly* renouncing the modesty of prose for the impassioned forms of lyrical poetry. It was a great thing to be the

leader of prose composition; great even, as we all can see at other times, to be absolutely first in any one subdivision of composition: how much more in one whole bisection of literature! And if it is objected that Herodotus was *not* the eldest of prose writers, doubtless, in an absolute sense, no man was. There must always have been short public inscriptions, not admitting of metre, as where numbers, quantities, dimensions, were concerned. It is enough that all feeble tentative explorers of the art had been too meagre in matter, too rude in manner, like Fabius Pictor amongst the Romans, to captivate the ears of men, and *thus* to insure their own propagation. Without annoying the reader by the cheap erudition of parading defunct names before him, it is certain that Scylax, an author still surviving, was nearly contemporary with Herodotus; and not very wide of him by his subject. In *his* case it is probable that the mere practical benefits of his book to the navigators of the Mediterranean in that early period, had multiplied his book so as eventually to preserve it. Yet, as Major Rennel remarks, "Geog. Syst. of Herod.," p. 610—"Scylax must be regarded as a seaman or pilot, and the author of a coasting directory;" as a mechanic artisan, ranking with Hamilton Moore or Gunter, not as a great liberal artist—an *intellectual* potentate like Herodotus. Such now upon the scale of intellectual claims as was this geographical rival by comparison with Herodotus, such doubtless were his rivals or predecessors in history, in antiquities, and in the other provinces which he occupied. And, generally, the fragments of these authors, surviving in Pagan as well as Christian collections, show that they were such. So that, in a high, virtual sense, Herodotus was to prose composition what Homer, six hundred years earlier, had been to verse.

II. But whence arose the other mistake about Herodotus—the fancy that his great work was exclusively (or even chiefly) a history? It arose simply from a mistranslation, which subsists everywhere to this day. We remember that Kant, in one of his miscellaneous essays, finding a necessity for explaining the term *Historie* [why we cannot say, since the Germans have the self-grown word *Geschichte* for that idea], deduces it, of course, from the Greek Ἱστορια. This brings him to an occasion for defining the term. And how? It is laughable to imagine the anxious reader bending his ear to catch the Kantean whisper, and finally solemnly hearing that Ἱστορια means—History. Really, Professor Kant, we should almost have guessed as much. But such derivations teach no more than the ample circuit of Bardolph's definition—"*accommodated*—that whereby a man is, or may be thought to be"—what? "*accommodated.*" Kant was a masterly *Latin* scholar; in fact, a fellow-pupil with the admirable D. Ruhnken, but an indifferent Grecian. And spite of the old traditional "Historiarum Libri Novem," which stands upon all Latin title-pages of Herodotus, we need scarcely remind a Greek scholar, that the verb ἱστορεω or the noun ἱστορια *never* bears, in this writer, the latter sense of recording and memorializing. The substantive is a word frequently employed by Herodotus; often in the plural number, and uniformly it means *inquiries* or *investigations;* so that the proper English version of the title-page would be—"Of the *Researches* made by Herodotus, Nine Books." And, in reality, that is the very meaning, and the secret drift of the consecration (running overhead through these nine sections) to the nine Muses. Had the work been designed as chiefly historical, it would have been placed under the patronage of the one sole muse presiding over History. But because

the very opening sentence tells us that it is *not* chiefly historical, that it is so partially, that it rehearses the acts of men [τα γενομενα] together with the monumental structures of human labour [τα εργα]—for the true sense of which word, in this position, see the first sentence in section thirty-five of *Euterpe*, and other things beside [τα τε αλλα], because, in short, not any limited annals, because the mighty revelation of the world to its scattered inhabitants, because—

> "Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
> Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli—"

therefore it was that a running title, or superscription, so extensive and so aspiring, had at some time been adopted. *Every* muse, and not one only, is presumed to be interested in the work; and, in simple truth, this legend of dedication is but an expansion of variety more impressively conveyed of what had been already notified in the inaugural sentence; whilst both this sentence and that dedication were designed to meet that very misconception which has since, notwithstanding, prevailed.*

These rectifications ought to have some effect in elevating —first, the rank of Herodotus; secondly, his present attractions. Most certain we are that few readers are

* But—"*How* has it prevailed," some will ask, "if an error? Have not great scholars sate upon Herodotus?" Doubtless, many. There is none greater, for instance, merely as a Grecian scholar, than Valckenaer. Whence we conclude that inevitably this error has been remarked somewhere. And as to the erroneous Latin version still keeping its ground, partly that may be due to the sort of superstition which everywhere protects old usages in formal situations like a title-page, partly to the fact that there is no happy Latin word to express "Researches." But, however that may be, all the scholars in the world cannot get rid of the evidence involved in the general use of the word ἱστορια (*investigation*) by Herodotus.

aware of the *various* amusement conveyed from all sources then existing by this most splendid of travellers. Dr. Johnson has expressed in print (and not merely in the strife of conversation) the following extravagant idea—that to Homer, as its original author, may be traced back, at least in outline, *every* tale or complication of incidents, now moving in modern poems, romances, or novels. Now, it is not necessary to denounce such an assertion as false, because, upon two separate reasons, it shows itself to be impossible. In the first place, the motive to such an assertion was—to emblazon the inventive faculty of Homer; but it happens that Homer could not invent anything, small or great, under the very principles of Grecian art. To be a fiction, as to matters of *action* (for in embellishments the rule might be otherwise), was to be ridiculous and unmeaning in Grecian eyes. We may illustrate the Grecian feeling on this point (however little known to modern readers) by our own dolorous disappointment when we opened the *Alhambra* of Mr. Washington Irving. We had supposed it to be some real Spanish or Moorish legend connected with that grand architectural romance; and, behold! it was a mere Sadler's Wells travesty (we speak of its plan, not of its execution) applied to some slender fragments from past days. Such, but far stronger, would have been the disappointment to Grecian feelings, in finding any poetic (*à fortiori*, any prose) legend to be a fiction of the writer's—words cannot measure the reaction of disgust. And thence it was that no tragic poet of Athens ever took for his theme any tale or fable not already pre-existing in *some* known version of it, though now and then it might be the least popular version. It was *capital* as an offence of the intellect, it was lunatic to do otherwise. This is a most important characteristic of ancient taste; and most interest-

ing in its philosophic value for any comparative estimate of modern art, as against ancient. In particular, no just commentary can ever be written on the poetics of Aristotle, which leaves this out of sight. Secondly, as against Dr. Johnson, it is evident that the whole character, the very principle of movement, in many modern stories, depends upon sentiments derived remotely from Christianity; and others upon usages or manners peculiar to modern civilisation; so as in either case to involve a moral anachronism if viewed as Homeric, consequently as Pagan. Not the colouring only of the fable, but the very incidents, one and all, and the situations, and the perplexities, are constantly the product of something characteristically modern in the circumstances,—sometimes, for instance, in the climate; *for the ancients had no experimental knowledge of severe climates.* With these double impossibilities before us, of any absolute fictions in a Pagan author that could be generally fitted to anticipate modern tales, we shall not transfer to Herodotus the impracticable compliment paid by Dr. Johnson to Homer. But it is certain that the very best collection of stories furnished by Pagan funds, lies dispersed through his great work. One of the best of the *Arabian Nights*, the *very* best as regards the structure of the plot—viz., the tale of *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*—is evidently derived from an incident in that remarkable Egyptian legend, connected with the treasury-house of Rhampsinitus. This, except two of his Persian legends (Cyrus and Darius), is the longest tale in Herodotus, and by much the best in an artist's sense; indeed, its own remarkable merit, as a fable in which the incidents *successively generate each other*, caused it to be transplanted by the Greeks to their own country. Vossius, in his work on the Greek historians, and a hundred years later, Valckenaer,

with many other scholars, had pointed out the singular conformity of this memorable Egyptian story with several that afterwards circulated in Greece. The eldest of these transfers was undoubtedly the Bœotian tale (but in days before the name Bœotia existed) of Agamedes and Trophonius, architects, and sons to the King of Orchomenos, who built a treasure-house at Hyria (noticed by Homer in his ship catalogue), followed by tragical circumstances, the very same as those recorded by Herodotus. It is true that the latter incidents, according to the Egyptian version—the monstrous device of Rhampsinitus for discovering the robber at the price of his daughter's honour, and the final reward of the robber for his petty ingenuity (which, after all, belonged chiefly to the deceased architect), ruin the tale as a whole. But these latter incidents are obviously forgeries of another age, "*angeschlossen*" fastened on by fraud, "*an den ersten aelteren theil,*" to the first and elder part, as Mueller rightly observes, p. 97 of his *Orchomenos.* And even here it is pleasing to notice the incredulity of Herodotus, who was not, like so many of his Christian commentators, sceptical upon previous system and by wholesale, but equally prone to believe wherever his heart (naturally reverential) suggested an interference of superior natures, and ready to doubt wherever his excellent judgment detected marks of incoherency. He records the entire series of incidents as τα λεγομενα ακόῃ, reports of events which had reached him by hearsay, εμοι δε ου πιστα—"but to me," he says pointedly, "not credible."

In this view, as a *thesaurus fabularum*, a great repository of anecdotes and legends, tragic or romantic, Herodotus is so far beyond all Pagan competition, that we are thrown upon Christian literatures for any corresponding form of merit. The case has often been imagined playfully, that a

man were restricted to one book, and in that case what ought to be his choice; and, supposing all books so solemn as those of a religious interest to be laid out of the question, many are the answers which have been pronounced, according to the difference of men's minds. Rousseau, as is well known, on such an assumption made his election for Plutarch. But shall we tell the reader *why?* It was not altogether his taste, or his judicious choice, which decided him; for choice there can be none amongst elements unexamined—it was his limited reading. Rousseau, like William Wordsworth, had read—at the outside twelve volumes 8vo, in his whole lifetime. Except a few papers in the French *Encyclopédie* during his maturer years, and some dozen of works presented to him by their authors where they happened to be his own friends, Rousseau had read little (if anything at all) beyond Plutarch's Lives in a bad French translation, and Montaigne. Though not a Frenchman, having had an education (if such one can call it) thoroughly French, he had the usual puerile French craze about Roman virtue, and republican simplicity, and Cato, and "all that." So that *his* decision goes for little. And even he, had he read Herodotus, would have thought twice before he made up his mind. The truth is, that in such a case, suppose, for example, Robinson Crusoe empowered to import one book and no more into his insular hermitage, the most powerful of human books must be unavoidably excluded, and for the following reason: that in the direct ratio of its profundity will be the unity of any fictitious interest; a Paradise Lost, or a King Lear, could not agitate or possess the mind in the degree that they do, if they were at leisure to "amuse" us. So far from relying on its unity, the work which should aim at the *maximum* of amusement, ought to rely on the *maximum* of variety. And in that view it is

that we urge the paramount pretensions of Herodotus: since not only are his topics separately of primary interest, each for itself, but they are collectively the most varied in the quality of that interest, and they are touched with the most flying and least lingering pen; for, of all writers, Herodotus is the most cautious not to trespass on his reader's patience: his transitions are the most fluent whilst they are the most endless, justifying themselves to the understanding as much as they recommend themselves to the spirit of hurrying curiosity; and his narrations or descriptions are the most animated by the generality of their abstractions, whilst they are the most faithfully individual by the felicity of their selection amongst circumstances.

Once, and in a public situation, I myself denominated Herodotus the Froissart of antiquity. But I was then speaking of him exclusively in his character of historian; and even so, I did him injustice. Thus far it is true the two men agree, that both are less political, or reflecting, or moralizing, as historians, than they are scenical and splendidly picturesque. But Froissart is little else than an annalist. Whereas Herodotus is the counterpart of some ideal Pandora, by the universality of his accomplishments. He is a traveller of discovery, like Captain Cook or Park. He is a naturalist, the earliest that existed. He is a mythologist, and a speculator on the origin, as well as value, of religious rites. He is a political economist by instinct of genius, before the science of economy had a name or a conscious function; and by two great records, he has put us up to the level of *all* that can excite our curiosity at that great era of moving civilisation:—First, as respects Persia, by the elaborate review of the various satrapies or great lieutenancies of the empire—that vast empire which had absorbed the Assyrian, Median, Babylonian, Little

Syrian, and Egyptian kingdoms; registering against each separate viceroyalty, from Algiers to Lahore beyond the Indus, what was the amount of its annual tribute to the gorgeous exchequer of Susa; and secondly, as respects Greece, by his review of the numerous little Grecian states, and their several contingents in ships, or in soldiers, or in both (according as their position happened to be inland or maritime), towards the universal armament against the second and greatest of the Persian invasions. Two such documents, two such archives of political economy, two monuments of corresponding value do not exist elsewhere in history. Egypt had now ceased, and we may say that (according to the scriptural prophecy) it had ceased for ever, to be an independent realm. Persia had now for seventy years had her foot upon the neck of this unhappy land; and, in one century beyond the death of Herodotus, the two-horned * he-goat of Macedon was destined to butt it down into hopeless prostration. But so far as Egypt, from her vast antiquity, or from her great resources, was entitled to a more circumstantial notice than any other satrapy of the great empire, such a notice she has; and I do not scruple to say, though it may seem a bold word, that, from the many scattered features of Egyptian habits or usages incidentally indicated by Herodotus, a better

* "*Two-horned:*"—in one view, as having no successor, Alexander was called the *one-horned.* But it is very singular that all Oriental nations, without knowing anything of the scriptural symbols under which Alexander is described by Daniel as the strong he-goat who butted against the ram of Persia, have always called him the "two-horned," with a covert allusion to his European and his Asiatic kingdom. And it is equally singular, that unintentionally this symbol falls in with Alexander's own assumption of a descent from Libyan Jupiter-Ammon, to whom the double horns were an indispensable and characteristic symbol.

portrait of Egyptian life, and a better abstract of Egyptian political economy, might even yet be gathered, than from all the writers of Greece for the cities of their native land.

But take him as an exploratory traveller and as a naturalist, who had to break ground for the earliest entrenchments in these new functions of knowledge; it may be said without exaggeration, that *mutatis mutandis*, and *concessis concedendis*, Herodotus has the separate qualifications of the two men whom we would select by preference as the most distinguished amongst Christian traveller-naturalists; he has the universality of the Prussian Humboldt; and he has the picturesque fidelity to nature of the English Dampier—of whom the last was a simple self-educated seaman, but strong-minded by nature, austerely accurate through his moral reverence for truth, and zealous in pursuit of knowledge, to an excess which raises him to a level with the noble Greek. Dampier, when in the last stage of exhaustion from a malignant dysentery, unable to stand upright, and surrounded by perils in a land of infidel fanatics, crawled on his hands and feet to verify a question in natural history, under the blazing forenoon of the tropics; and Herodotus having no motive but his own inexhaustible thirst of knowledge, embarked on a separate voyage, fraught with hardships, towards a chance of clearing up what seemed a difficulty of some importance in deducing the religious mythology of his country.

But it is in those characters by which he is best known to the world, viz., as a historian and a geographer—that Herodotus levies the heaviest tribute on our reverence; and precisely in those characters it is that he now claims the amplest atonement, having formerly sustained the grossest outrages of insult and slander on the peculiar merits attached to each of those characters. Credulous he was

supposed to be, in a degree transcending the privilege of old garrulous nurses; hyperbolically extravagant beyond Sir John Mandeville; and lastly, as if he had been a Mendez Pinto or a Munchausen, he was saluted as the "father of lies."* Now, on these calumnies, it is pleasant to know that his most fervent admirer no longer feels it requisite to utter one word in the way of complaint or vindication. Time has carried him round to the diametrical counterpole of estimation. Examination and more learned study have justified every iota of those statements *to which he pledged his own private authority.* His chronology is better to this day than any single system opposed to it. His dimensions and distances are so far superior to those of later travellers, whose hands were strengthened by all the powers of military command and regal autocracy, that Major Rennell, upon a deliberate retrospect of his works, preferred his authority to that of those who came after him as conquerors and rulers of the kingdoms which he had described as a simple traveller; nay, to the later authority of those who had conquered those conquerors. It is gratifying that a judge, so just and thoughtful as the Major, should declare the reports of Alexander's officers on the distances and stations in the Asiatic part of his empire, less trustworthy by much than the reports of Herodotus: yet, who was more liberally devoted to science than Alexander? or what were the humble powers of the foot traveller in comparison with those of the mighty earth-shaker, for whom prophecy had been on the watch for centuries? It is gratifying, that a judge like the Major should find the

* Viz. (as I believe), by Vicesimus Knox—a writer now entirely forgotten. "*Father of History* you call him? Much rather the *Father of Lies.*"

same advantage on the side of Herodotus, as to the distances in the Egyptian and Libyan part of this empire, on a comparison with the most accomplished of Romans, Pliny, Strabo, Ptolemy (for all are Romans who benefited by any Roman machinery), coming five and six centuries later. I, for my part, hold the accuracy of Herodotus to be all but marvellous, considering the wretched apparatus which he could then command in the popular measures. The *stadium*, it is true, was more accurate, because less equivocal in those Grecian days, than afterwards, when it inter-oscillated with the Roman *stadium;* but all the multiples of that stadium, such as the *schœnus*, the Persian *parasang*, or the military *stathmus*, were only less vague than the *coss* of Hindostan in their ideal standards, and as fluctuating *practically* as are all computed distances at all times and places. The close approximations of Herodotus to the returns of distances upon caravan routes of five hundred miles by the most vigilant of modern travellers, checked by the caravan controllers, is a bitter retort upon his calumniators. And, as to the consummation of the insults against him in the charge of wilful falsehood, I explain it out of hasty reading and slight acquaintance with Greek. The sensibility of Herodotus to his own future character in this respect, under a deep consciousness of his upright forbearance on the one side, and of the extreme liability on the other side to uncharitable construction for any man moving amongst Egyptian thaumaturgical traditions, comes forward continually in his anxious distinctions between what he gives on his own ocular experience (οψις)—what upon his own inquiries, or combination of inquiries with previous knowledge (ἱστοριη)—what upon hearsay (ακοη)—what upon current tradition (λογος). And the evidences are multiplied over and above these distinctions, of the irritation which besieged his mind

as to the future wrongs he might sustain from the careless and the unprincipled. Had truth been less precious in his eyes, was it tolerable to be supposed a liar for so vulgar an object as that of creating a stare by wonder-making? The high-minded Grecian, justly proud of his superb intellectual resources for taking captive the imaginations of his half-polished countrymen, disdained such base artifices, which belong more properly to an effeminate and over-stimulated stage of civilisation. And, once for all, he had announced at an early point as the *principle* of his work, as what ran along the whole line of his statements by way of basis or subsumption (*παρα παντα τον λογον ὑποκειται*)—that he wrote upon the faith of hearsay from the Egyptians severally: meaning by "severally" (*ἑκαστων*)—that he did not adopt any chance hearsay, but such as was guaranteed by the men who presided over each several department of Egyptian official or ceremonial life.

Having thus said something towards revindicating for Herodotus his proper station—first, as a *power* in literature; next, as a geographer, economist, mythologist, antiquary, historian—I shall draw the reader's attention to the remarkable "set of the current" towards that very consummation and result of justice amongst the learned within the last two generations. There is no similar case extant of truth slowly righting itself. Seventy years ago, the reputation of Herodotus for veracity was at the lowest ebb. That prejudice still survives popularly. But amongst the learned it has gradually given way to better scholarship, and to two generations of travellers, starting with far superior preparation for their difficult labours. Accordingly, at this day, each successive commentator, better able to read Greek, and better provided with solutions for the inevitable errors of a *reporter*, drawing upon others for his facts, with

only an occasional interposition of his own opinion, comes with increasing reverence to his author. The *laudator temporis acti* takes for granted in his sweeping ignorance, that we of the present generation are less learned than our immediate predecessors. It happens, that all over Europe the course of learning has been precisely in the inverse direction. Poor was the condition of Greek learning in England, when Dr. Cooke (one of the five wretched old boys who operated upon Gray's *Elegy* in the character of Greek translators) presided at Cambridge as their Greek professor. See, or rather touch with the tongs, his edition* of Aristotle's *Poetics*. Equally poor was its condition in Germany; for, if one swallow could make a summer, we had that in England. Poorer by far was its condition (as generally it is) in France, where a great Don in Greek letters, an Abbé who passed for unfathomably learned, having occasion to translate a Greek sentence, saying that "Herodotus, even whilst Ionicizing (using the Ionic dialect), had yet spelt a particular name with the *alpha* and not with the *eta*," rendered the passage "Herodote et aussi Jazon." The Greek words were these three—῾Ηροδοτος και ιαζων —*i.e.*, Herodotus even whilst Ionicizing. He had never heard that και means *even* almost as often as it means *and*: thus he introduced to the world a fine new author, one Jazon, Esquire; and the squire holds his place in the learned Abbé's book to this day. Good Greek

* Which edition the arrogant Mathias in his *Pursuits of Literature* (by far the most popular of books from 1797 to 1802) highly praised; though otherwise amusing himself with the folly of the other grey-headed men contending for a school-boy's prize. It was the loss of dignity, however, in the reverend translator, not their worthless Greek, which he saw cause to ridicule; for Mathias, though reading ordinary Greek with facility, and citing it with a needless and a pedantic profusion, was not in any exquisite sense a Grecian

scholars are now in the proportion of perhaps sixty to one by comparison with the penultimate generation: and this proportion holds equally for Germany and for England. So that the restoration of Herodotus to his place in literature, his *Palingenesia*, has been no caprice, but is due to the vast depositions of knowledge, equal for the last seventy or eighty years to the accumulated product of the entire previous interval from Herodotus himself down to 1760, in every one of those particular fields which this author was led by his situation to cultivate.

Meantime, the work of cleansing this great tank or depository of archæology (the one sole reservoir, so placed in point of time as to collect and draw all the contributions from the frontier ground between the *mythical* and the *historical* period) is still proceeding. Every fresh labourer, by new accessions of direct aid, or by new combinations of old suggestions, finds himself able to purify the interpretation of Herodotus by wider analogies, or to account for his mistakes by more accurately developing the situation of the speaker. We also bring our own unborrowed contributions. We also would wish to promote this great labour, which, be it remembered, concerns no secondary section of human progress, searches no blind corners or nooks of history, but traverses the very crests and summits of human annals, with a solitary exception for the Hebrew Scriptures, so far as opening civilisation is concerned. The commencement—the solemn inauguration—of history, is placed no doubt in the commencement of the Olympiads, 777 years before Christ. The doors of the great theatre were then thrown open. That is undeniable. But the performance did not actually commence till 555 B.C. (the *locus* of Cyrus). Then began the great tumult of nations—the *termashaw*, to speak *Bengalicè*. Then began the procession, the pomp, the in-

terweaving of the western tribes, not always by bodily presence, but by the *actio in distans* of politics. And the birth of Herodotus was precisely in the seventy-first year from that period. It is the greatest of periods that is concerned. And we also, as willingly we repeat, would offer our contingent. What we propose to do is to bring forward two or three important suggestions of others not yet popularly known—shaping and pointing, if possible, their application—brightening their justice, or strengthening their outlines. And with these we propose to intermingle one or two suggestions, more exclusively our own.

I.—*The Non-Planetary Earth of Herodotus in its relation to the Planetary Sun.*

Mr. Hermann Bobrik is the first torch-bearer to Herodotus, who has thrown a strong light on his theory of the earth's relation to the solar system. This is one of the *præcognita*, literally indispensable to the comprehension of the geographical basis assumed by Herodotus. And it is really interesting to see how one original error had drawn after it a train of others—how one restoration of light has now illuminated a whole hemisphere of objects. We suppose it the very next thing to a fatal impossibility, that any man should at once rid his mind so profoundly of all natural biases from education, or almost from human instinct, as barely to suspect the physical theory of Herodotus—barely to imagine the idea of a divorce occurring in *any* theory between the solar orb and the great phenomena of summer and winter. Prejudications, having the force of a necessity, had blinded generation after generation of students to the very admission *in limine* of such a theory as could go the length of dethroning the sun himself from all influ-

ence over the great vicissitudes of heat and cold—seed-time and harvest—for man. They did not see what actually *was*, what lay broadly below their eyes, in Herodotus, because it seemed too fantastic a dream to suppose that it *could* be. The case is far more common than feeble psychologists imagine. Numerous are the instances in which we actually see—not that which is really there to be seen—but that which we believe *à priori* ought to be there. And in cases so palpable as that of an external sense, it is not difficult to set the student on his guard. But in cases more intellectual or moral, like several in Herodotus, it is difficult for the teacher himself to be effectually vigilant. It was not anything actually seen by Herodotus which led him into denying the solar functions; it was his own independent speculation. This suggested to him a plausible hypothesis; plausible it was for that age of the world; and afterwards, on applying it to the actual difficulties of the case, this hypothesis seemed so far good, that it did really unlock them. The case stood thus:—Herodotus contemplated Cold not as a mere privation of Heat, but as a positive quality; quite as much entitled to "high consideration," in the language of ambassadors, as its rival heat; and quite as much to a "retiring pension," in case of being superannuated. Thus we all know, from Addison's fine raillery, that a certain philosopher regarded darkness not at all as any result from the absence of light, but fancied that, as some heavenly bodies are luminaries, so others (which he called *tenebrific stars*) might have the office of "raying out positive darkness." In the infancy of science, the idea is natural to the human mind; and we remember hearing a great man of our own times declare, that no sense of conscious power had ever so vividly dilated his mind, nothing so like a revelation, as when one day in broad sunshine,

whilst yet a child, he discovered that his own shadow, which he had often angrily hunted, was no real existence, but a mere *hindering* of the sun's light from filling up the space screened by his own body. The old grudge, which he cherished against this coy fugitive shadow, melted away in the rapture of this great discovery. To him the discovery had doubtless been originally half suggested by explanations of his elders imperfectly comprehended. But in itself the distinction between the *affirmative* and the *negative* is a step perhaps the most costly in *effort* of any that the human mind is summoned to take; and the greatest indulgence is due to those early stages of civilisation when this step had *not* been taken. For Herodotus there existed two great counter-forces in absolute hostility—heat and cold; and these forces were incarnated in the WINDS. It was the north and north-east wind, not any distance of the sun, which radiated cold and frost; it was the southern wind from Ethiopia, not at all the sun, which radiated heat. But could a man so sagacious as Herodotus stand with his ample Grecian forehead exposed to the noonday sun, and suspect no part of the calorific agency to be seated in the sun? Certainly he could not. But this partial agency is no more than what we of this day allow to secondary or tertiary causes apart from the principal. We that regard the sun as upon the whole our planetary fountain of light, yet recognise an electrical *aurora*, a zodiacal light, &c., as substitutes not palpably dependent. We that regard the sun as upon the whole our fountain of heat, yet recognise many co-operative, many modifying forces having the same office—such as the local configuration of ground—such as sea neighbourhoods or land neighbourhoods, marshes or none, forests or none, strata of soil fitted to retain heat and fund it, or to disperse it and cool it. Precisely in the same

way Herodotus did allow an agency to the sun upon the *daily* range of heat, though he allowed none to the same luminary in regulating the *annual* range. What caused the spring and autumn, the summer and winter (though generally in those ages there were but two seasons recognised), was the action of the winds. The diurnal arch of heat (as we may call it) ascending from sunrise to some hour (say two, P.M.), when the sum of the two heats (the funded annual heat and the fresh increments of *daily* heat) reaches its *maximum*, and the descending limb of the same arch from this hour to sunset—this he explained entirely out of the sun's *daily* revolution, which to him was, of course, no apparent motion, but a real one in the sun. It is truly amusing to hear the great man's infantine simplicity in describing the effects of the solar journey. The sun rises, it seems, in India;* and these poor Indians, roasted by whole nations at breakfast-time, are then up to their chins in water, whilst we thankless Westerns are taking "tea and toast" at our ease. However, it is a long lane which has no turning; and by noon the sun has driven so many stages away from India, that the poor creatures begin to come out of their rivers, and really find things tolerably

* Which word *India*, it must be remembered, was liable to no such equivocation as it is now. India meant simply the land of the river Indus, *i. e.*, all the territory lying eastward of that river down to the mouths of the Ganges; and the Indians meant simply the Hindoos, or natives of Hindostan. Whereas, at present, we give a secondary sense to the word *Indian*, applying it to a race of savages in the New World, viz., to all the *aboriginal* natives of the American continent, and also to the aboriginal natives of all the islands scattered over the Pacific Ocean to the west of that continent; and all the islands in the Gulf of Mexico to the east of it. Standing confusion has thus been introduced into the acceptation of the word *Indian;* a confusion corresponding to that which besieged the ancient use of the term *Scythian*, and, in a minor degree, the term *Ethiopian*.

comfortable. India is now cooled down to a balmy Grecian temperature. "All right behind!" as the mail-coach guards proclaim; but not quite right ahead, when the sun is racing away over the boiling brains of the Ethiopians, Libyans, &c., and driving Jupiter-Ammon perfectly distracted with his furnace. But when things are at the worst, the proverb assures us that they will mend. And for an early five o'clock dinner, Ethiopia finds that she has no great reason to complain. All civilized people are now cool and happy for the rest of the day. But, as to the woolly-headed rascals on the west coast of Africa, they "catch it" towards sunset, and "no mistake." Yet why trouble our heads about inconsiderable black fellows like them, who have been cool all day whilst better men were melting away by pailfuls? And such is the history of a summer's day in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. As to little Greece, she is but skirted by the sun, who keeps away far to the south; thus she is maintained in a charming state of equilibrium by her fortunate position on the very frontier line of the fierce *Boreas* and the too voluptuous *Notos.*

Meantime one effect follows from this transfer of the solar functions to the winds, which has not been remarked, —viz., that Herodotus has a double north; one governed by the old noisy Boreas, another by the silent constellation Arktos. And the consequence of this fluctuating north, as might be guessed, is the want of any true north at all; for the two points of the wind and the constellation do not coincide, in the first place; and secondly, the wind does not coincide with itself, but naturally traverses through a few points right and left. Next, the east also will be indeterminate from a separate cause. Had Herodotus lived in a high northern latitude, there is no doubt that the ample

range of difference between the northerly points of rising in the summer and the southerly in winter, would have forced his attention upon the fact, that only at the equinox, vernal or autumnal, does the sun's rising accurately coincide with the east. But in his Ionian climate, the deflections either way, to the north or to the south, were too inconsiderable to *force* themselves upon the eye; and thus a more indeterminate east would arise—never rigorously corrected, because requiring so moderate a correction. Now, a vague unsettled east, would support a vague unsettled north. And, of course, through whatever arch of variations either of these points vibrated, precisely upon that scale the west and the south would follow them.

Thus arises, upon a simple and easy genesis, that condition of the compass (to use the word by anticipation) which must have tended to confuse the geographical system of Herodotus, and which does, in fact, account for the else unaccountable obscurities in some of its leading features. These anomalous features would, on their own account, have deserved notice; but now, after this explanation, they will have a separate value of illustrated proofs in relation to the present article, No. I.

II.—*The Danube of Herodotus considered as a counterpole to the Nile.*

There is nothing more perplexing to some of the many commentators on Herodotus than all which he says of the river Danube: nor anything easier, under the preparation of the preceding article. The Danube, or, in the nomenclature of Herodotus, the *Istros*, is described as being in all respects *εκ παραλληλου*, by which we must understand corresponding rigorously, yet antistrophically (as the Greeks express it), similar angles, similar dimensions, but in an

inverse order, to the Egyptian Nile. The Nile, in its most easterly section, flows from south to north. Consequently the Danube, by the rule of *parallelism*, ought to flow through a corresponding section from north to south. But, say the commentators, it does *not*. Now, verbally they might seem wrong; but substantially, as regards the justification of Herodotus, they are right. Our business, however, is not to justify Herodotus, but to explain him. Undoubtedly there is a point about one hundred and fifty miles east of Vienna, where the Danube descends almost due south for a space of three hundred miles; and this is a very memorable reach of the river; for somewhere within that long corridor of land which lies between itself (this Danube section), and a direct parallel section equally long, of the Hungarian river Theiss, once lay, in the fifth century, the royal city or encampment of Attila. Gibbon placed the city in the northern part of this corridor (or, strictly speaking, this Mesopotamia), consequently about two hundred miles to the east of Vienna; but others, and especially Hungarian writers, better acquainted by personal examination with the ground, remove it to one hundred and fifty miles more to the south; that is, to the centre of the corridor (or gallery of land margined by the two rivers). Now, undoubtedly, except along the margin of this Attila's corridor, there is no considerable section of the Danube which flows southward: and this will not answer the postulates of Herodotus. Generally speaking, the Danube holds a headlong course to the east. Undoubtedly this must be granted: and so far it might seem hopeless to seek for that kind of parallelism to the Nile which Herodotus asserts. But the question for us does not concern what *is* or then *was*—the question is solely about what Herodotus can be shown to have meant. And here comes

in, seasonably and serviceably, that vagueness as to the points of the compass which we have explained in the preceding article. This, connected with the positive assertion of Herodotus as to an inverse correspondency with the Nile (north and south, therefore, as the antistrophe to south and north), would place beyond a doubt the creed of Herodotus—which is the question that concerns *us*. And *vice versâ*, this creed of Herodotus as to the course of the Danube, in its main latter section when approaching the Euxine Sea, reacts to confirm all we have said, *proprio marte*, on the indeterminate articulation of the Ionian compass then current. Here we have at once the *à priori* reasons making it probable that Herodotus would have a vagrant compass; secondly, many separate instances confirming this probability; thirdly, the particular instance of the Danube, as antistrophizing with the Nile, not reconcilable with any other principle; and fourthly, the following independent demonstration, that the Ionian compass must have been confused in its leading divisions. Mark, reader, Herodotus terminates his account of the Danube and its course, by affirming that this mighty river enters the Euxine—at what point? Opposite, says he, to Sinope. Could that have been imagined? Sinope, being a Greek settlement in a region where such settlements were rare, was notorious to all the world as the flourishing emporium, on the south shore of the Black Sea, for a civilized people, literally *hustled* by barbarians. Consequently—and this is a point to which all commentators alike are blind—the Danube of Herodotus descends upon the Euxine in a line running due south. Else, we demand, how could it antistrophize with the Nile? Else, we demand, how could it lie right over against the Sinope? Else, we demand, how could it make that right-angle bend to the west in the earlier section

of its course, which is presupposed in its perfect analogy to the Nile of Herodotus ? If already it were lying east and west in that lower part of its course which approaches the Euxine, what occasion could it offer for a right-angle turn, or for any turn at all—what possibility for any *angle* whatever between this lower reach and that superior reach so confessedly running eastward, according to *all* accounts of its derivation ?

For as respects the Nile, by way of close to this article, it remains to inform the reader—that Herodotus had evidently met in Upper Egypt slaves or captives in war from the regions of Soudan, Tombuctoo, &c. This is the opinion of Rennell, of Browne the visitor of the Ammonian Oasis, and many other principal authorities ; and for a *reason* which we always regard with more respect, though it were the weakest of reasons, than all the authorities of this world clubbed together. And this reason was the coincidence of what Herodotus reports, with the truth of facts first ascertained thousands of years later. These slaves, or some people from those quarters, had told him of a vast river lying east and west, of course the Niger, but (as he and they supposed) a superior section of the Nile ; and, therefore, by geometrical necessity, falling at right angles upon that other section of the Nile, so familiar to himself, lying south and north. Hence arose a faith (that is to say, not primarily hence, but hence in combination with a previous construction existing in his mind for the geometry of the Danube), that the two rivers Danube and Nile had a mystic relation as arctic and antarctic powers over man. Herodotus had been taught to figure the Danube as a stream of two main inclinations—an upper section rising in the extreme west of Europe, whence he travelled with the arrow's flight due east in search of his wife the Euxine ; but somewhere in

the middle of his course, hearing that her dwelling lay far to the south, and having then completed his distance in longitude, afterwards he ran down his latitude with the headlong precipitation of a lover, and surprised the bride due north from Sinope. This construction it was of the Danube's course which subsequently, upon his hearing of a corresponding western limb for the Nile, led him to perceive the completion of that analogy between the two rivers, its absolute perfection, which already he had partially suspected. Their very figurations now appeared to reflect and repeat each other in solemn mimicry, as previously he had discovered the mimical correspondence of their functions; for this latter doctrine had been revealed to him by the Egyptian priests, the then chief depositaries of Egyptian learning. They had informed him, and evidently had persuaded him, that already more than once the sun had gone round to the region of Europe; pursuing his diurnal arch as far to the north of Greece as now he did to the south; and carrying in his equipage all the changes of every kind which were required to make Scythia an Egypt, and consequently to make the Istros a Nile. The same annual swelling then filled the channel of the Danube, which at present gladdens the Nile. The same luxuriance of vegetation succeeded as a dowry to the gay summer-land of Trans-Euxine and Para-Danubian Europe, which for thousands of years had seemed the peculiar heritage of Egypt. Old Boreas—we are glad of that—was required to pack up "his alls," and be off; his new business was to plague the black rascals, and to bake them with hoar-frost; which must have caused them to shake their ears in some astonishment for a few centuries, until they got used to it. Whereas "the sweet south wind" of the Ancient Mariner, leaving Africa, pursued "the mariner's holloa," all over the

Euxine and the *Palus Mæotis.* The Danube, in short, became the Nile in another zone; and the same deadly curiosity haunted its fountains. But all in vain: nobody would reach the fountains; particularly as there would be another arm, El-Abiad or white river.

We are sorry that Herodotus should have been so vague and uncircumstantial in his account of these vicissitudes; since it is pretty evident to any man who reflects on the case—that, had he pursued the train of changes inevitable to Egypt under the one single revolution affecting the Nile itself as a slime-depositing river, his judicious intellect would soon have descried the obliteration of the whole Egyptian valley [elsewhere he himself calls that valley δωρον του Νειλου—a gift of the Nile], consequently the obliteration of the people, consequently the immemorial extinction of all those records—or, if they were posterior to the last revolution in favour of Egypt, at any rate of the one record —which could have transmitted the memory of such an astonishing transfer. Meantime the reader is now in possession of the whole theory contemplated by Herodotus. It was no mere *lusus naturæ* that the one river repeated the other, and, as it were, mocked the other in form and geographical relations. It was no joke that lurked under that mask of resemblance. Each *was* the other alternately. It was the case of Castor and Pollux, one brother rising as the other set. The Danube could always comfort himself with the idea—that he was the Nile "elect;" the other, or provisional Nile, only "continuing to hold the seals until his successor should be installed in office." The Nile, in fact, appears to have the best of it in our time; but then there is "a braw time coming," and, after all, swelling as he is with annual conceit, father Nile, in parliamentary phrase, is but the "warming-pan" for the Danube;

keeping the office warm for him. A new administration is formed, and out he goes bag and baggage.

It is less important, however, for us, though far more so for the two rivers, to speculate on the reversion of their final prospects, than upon the present symbols of this reversion in the unity of their forms. That is, it less concerns us to deduce the harmony of their functions from the harmony of their geographical courses, than to abide by the inverse argument—that, where the former harmony was so loudly inferred from the latter, at any rate, that fact will demonstrate the existence of the latter harmony in the judgment and faith of Herodotus. He could not possibly have insisted on the analogy between the two channels geographically, as good in logic for authenticating a secret and prophetic analogy between their alternating offices, but that at least he must firmly have believed in the first of these analogies—as already existing and open to the verification of the human eye. The second or ulterior analogy might be false, and yet affect only its own separate credit, whilst the falsehood of the first was ruinous to the credit of both. Whence it is evident that of the two resemblances in form and function, the resemblance in form was the least disputable of the two for Herodotus.

This argument, and the others which we have indicated, and amongst those others, above all, the position of the Danube's mouths right over against a city situated as was Sinope—*i.e.*, not doubtfully emerging from either flank of the Euxine, west or east, but broadly and almost centrally planted on the southern basis of that sea—we offer as a body of demonstrative proof, that, to the mature faith of Herodotus, the Danube or Istros ran north and south in its Euxine section, and that its right-angled section ran west and east—a very important element towards the true

Europe of Herodotus, which, as we contend, has not yet been justly conceived or figured by his geographical commentators.

III.—*On the Africa of Herodotus.*

There is an amusing blunder on this subject committed by Major Rennell. How often do we hear people commenting on the Scriptures, and raising up aërial edifices of argument, in which every iota of the logic rests, unconsciously to themselves, upon the accidental words of the English version, and melts away when applied to the original text; so that, in fact, the whole has no more strength than if it were built upon a pun or an *équivoque*. Such is the blunder of the excellent Major. And it is not timidly expressed. At p. 410, *Geog. Hist. of Herodotus*, he thus delivers himself:—"Although the term Lybia" (thus does Rennell always spell it, instead of *Libya*—a most unscholar-like blunder, but most pardonable in one so honestly professing to be no Greek scholar) "is occasionally used by Herodotus as synonymous to Africa (especially in *Melpom.*, &c. &c.), yet it is almost exclusively applied to that part bordering on the Mediterranean Sea between the Greater Syrtis and Egypt;" and he concludes the paragraph thus:—"So that Africa, and not Lybia, is the term generally employed by Herodotus." We stared on reading these words, as Aladdin stared when he found his palace missing, and the old thief, who had bought his lamp, trotting off with it on his back far beyond the bills of mortality. Naturally we concluded that it was ourselves who must be dreaming, and not the Major; so, taking a bed-candle, off we marched to bed. But the next morning, air clear and frosty, ourselves as sagacious as a grey-hound, we pounced at first sight on the self-same words. Thus, after all, it was the conceit mantling in our brain (of being in that in-

stance a cut above the Major), which turned out to be the sober truth ; and our modesty, our sobriety of mind, it was which turned out a windy tympany. Certainly, said we, if this be so, and that the word Africa is really standing in Herodotus, then it must be like that secret island called Ελβω, lying in some Egyptian lake, which was reported to Herodotus as having concealed itself from human eyes for five hundred and four years—a capital place it must have been against duns and the sheriff ; for it was an English mile in diameter, and yet no man could see it until a fugitive king, happening to be hard pressed in the rear, dived into the water, and came up to the light in the good little island ; where he lived happily for fifty years, and every day got bousy as a piper, in spite of all his enemies, who were roaming about the lake night and day to catch his most gracious majesty. He was king, at least, of Elb*o*, if he had no particular subjects but himself, as Nap was in our days of Elb*a* ; and perhaps both were less plagued with rebels than when sitting on the ampler thrones of Egypt and France. But surely the good Major must have dreamed a dream about this word *Africa ;* for how would it look in Ionic Greek—Αφρικη ? Did any man ever see such a word ? However, let not the reader believe that we are triumphing meanly in the advantage of our Greek. Milton, in one of his controversial works, exposing an insolent antagonist who pretended to a knowledge of Hebrew, which, in fact, he had not, remarks that the man must be ignoble, whoever he were, that would catch at a spurious credit, though it were but from a language which really he did not understand. But so far was Major Rennell from doing this, that, when no call upon him existed for saying one word upon the subject, frankly he volunteered a confession to all the world—that Greek he had none. The marvel is

the greater that, as Saunderson, blind from his infancy, was the best lecturer on colours early in the eighteenth century, so by far the best commentator on the Greek Herodotus has proved to be a military man, who knew nothing at all of Greek. Yet mark the excellence of upright dealing. Had Major Rennell pretended to Greek, were it but as much as went to the spelling of the word Africa, here was he a lost man. *Blackwood's Magazine* would now have exposed him. Whereas, things being as they are, we respect him and admire him sincerely. And, as to his wanting this one accomplishment, every man wants some. We ourselves can neither dance a hornpipe nor whistle Jim Crow,* without driving the whole musical world into black despair.

Africa, meantime, is a word imported into Herodotus by Mr. Beloe; whose name, we have been given to understand, was pronounced like that of our old domesticated friend the *bellows*, shorn of the *s*; and whose translation, judging from such extracts as we have seen in books, may be better than Littlebury's; but, if so, we should be driven into a mournful opinion of Mr. Littlebury. Strange that nearly all the classics, Roman as well as Greek, should be so meanly represented by their English reproducers. The French translators, it is true, are worse as a body. But in this particular instance of Herodotus they have a respectable translator. Larcher read Greek sufficiently; and was as much master of his author's peculiar learning as any one *general* commentator that can be mentioned.

But Africa the thing, not Africa the name, is that which puzzles all students of Herodotus, as, indeed, no little it puzzled Herodotus himself. Rennell makes one difficulty where, in fact, there is none; viz., that sometimes Hero-

* *Jim Crow*—which political air, at the time when this was written, every other man did (or could) whistle.

dotus refers Egypt to Libya, and sometimes refuses to do so. But in this there is no inconsistency, and no forgetfulness. Herodotus wisely adopted the excellent rule of "thinking with the learned, and talking with the people." Having once firmly explained his reasons for holding Egypt to be neither an Asiatic nor an African region, but the neutral frontier artificially created by the Nile, as, in short, a long corridor of separation between Asia and Africa; thus having, once for all, borne witness to the truth, afterwards, and generally, he is too little of a pedant to make war upon current forms of speech. What is the use of drawing off men's attention, in questions about *things*, by impertinent revisions of diction or by alien theories? Some people have made it a question—Whether Great Britain were not extra-European? and the island of Candia is generally assumed to be so. Some lawyers also (nay, some courts of justice) have entertained the question—Whether a man could be held related to his own mother? Not as though too remotely related, but as too nearly, and, in fact, absorbed within the lunar beams. Permit us to improve upon this by asking—Is a man related to himself? Yet, in all such cases, the publicist—the geographer—the lawyer, continue to talk as other people do; and, assuredly, the lawyer would regard a witness as perjured who should say, in speaking of a woman notoriously his mother, "Oh! I do assure you, sir, the woman is no relation of mine." The world of that day (and, indeed, it is not much more candid even now) would have it that Libya comprehended Egypt; and Herodotus, like the wise man that he was, having once or twice lodged his protest against that idea, then replies to the world—"Very well, if you say so, it *is* so;" precisely as Petruchio's wife, to soothe her mad husband, agrees that the sun is the moon; and, back again, that it is *not* the moon.

Here there is no real difficulty; for the arguments of Herodotus are of two separate classes, and both too strong to leave any doubt that his private opinion never varied by a hair's-breadth on this question. And it was a question far from verbal, of which any man may convince himself by reflecting on the disputes, at different periods, with regard to Macedon (both *Macedon* the original germ, and *Macedonia* the expanded kingdom) as a claimant of co-membership in the household of Greece; or on the disputes, more angry if less scornful, between Carthage and Cyrene as to the true limits between this dissyllabic* daughter of Tyre and the trisyllabic daughter of Greece. The very colour of the soil in Egypt—the rich black loam, precipitated by the creative river—already symbolized to Herodotus the deep repulsion lying between Egypt on the one side, and Libya, where all was red; between Egypt on the one side, and Asia, where all was calcined into white sand. And, as to the name, does not the reader catch *us* still using the word "Africa" instead of Libya, after all our sparring against that word as scarcely known by possibility to Herodotus?

But, beyond this controversy as to the true marches or frontier lines of the two great continents in common—Asia and Africa—there was another and a more grave one as to the size, shape, and limitations of Africa in particular. It is true that both Europe and Asia were imperfectly defined for Herodotus. But he fancied otherwise; for them he could trace a vague, rambling outline. Not so for Africa, unless a great event in Egyptian records were adopted for true. This was the voyage of circumnavigation accomplished under the orders of Pharaoh Necho. Dis-

* Καρχηδων, the Greek name for Carthage, is certainly more than dissyllabic, but we speak of the English names.

allowing this earliest recorded *Periplus*, then no man could say of Africa whether it were a large island or a boundless continent having no outline traceable by man, or (which, doubtless, would have been the favourite creed) whether it were not a technical *akté* such as Asia Minor; that is, not a peninsula like the Peloponnesus, or the tongues of land near mount Athos—because in that case the idea required a narrow neck or isthmus at the point of junction with the adjacent continent—but a square, tabular plate of ground, "a block of ground" (as the Americans say) having three sides washed by some sea, but a fourth side absolutely untouched by any sea whatever. On this word *akté*, as a term but recently drawn out of obscurity, we may say a word or two elsewhere; at present we proceed with the great African *Periplus*. We, like the rest of this world, held *that* to be a pure fable, so long as we had never anxiously studied the ancient geography, and consequently had never meditated on the circumstances of this story under the light of that geography, or of the current astronomy. But we have since greatly changed our opinion. And, though it would not have shaken that opinion to find Rennell dissenting, undoubtedly it much strengthened our opinion to find so cautious a judge concurring. Perhaps the very strongest argument in favour of the voyage, if we speak of any *single* argument, is that which Rennell insists on—namely, the sole circumstance reported by the voyagers which Herodotus pronounced incredible, viz., the assertion that in one part of it they had the sun on the right hand. And as we have always found young students at a loss for the meaning of that expression, since naturally it struck them that a man might bring the sun at any place on either hand, or on neither, we will stop for one moment to explain, for the use of such youthful readers, that, as in military

descriptions, you are always presumed to look *down* the current of a river, so that the "right" bank of the Rhine, for instance, is *always* to a soldier the German bank, the "left" *always*, in a military sense, the French bank, in contempt of the traveller's position; so, in speaking of the sun, you are presumed to place your back to the east, and to accompany him on his daily route. In that position it will be impossible for a man in our latitudes to bring the sun on his *right* shoulder, since the sun never even rises to be vertically over his head. First, when the man goes south so far as to enter the northern tropic, would such a phenomenon be possible; and if he persisted in going beyond the equator and southern tropic, then he would find all things inverted as regards our hemisphere. Then he would find it as impossible, when moving concurrently with the sun, *not* to have the sun on his right hand, as with us to realize that phenomenon. Now, it is very clear, that if the Egyptian voyagers did actually double the Cape of Good Hope so far to the south of the equator, then, by mere necessity, this inexplicable phenomenon (for to them it *was* inexplicable) would pursue them for months in succession. Here is the point in this argument which we would press on the reader's consideration; and, inadvertently, Rennell has omitted this aspect of the argument altogether. To Herodotus, as we have seen, it was so absolutely incredible a romance, that he rejected it summarily. And why not, therefore, go the entire length, and reject the total voyage, when thus in *his* view partially discredited? That question recalls us to the certainty that there must have been *other* proofs, independent of this striking allegation, too strong to allow of scepticism in this wise man's mind. He fancied (and with *his* theory of the heavens, in which there was no equator, no central limit, no province of equal tropics on either hand of

that limit, could he have done otherwise than fancy?) that Jack, after his long voyage, having then no tobacco for his recreation, and no grog, took out his allowance in the shape of wonder-making. He "bounced" a little, he "Cretized;"* and who could be angry? And laughable it is to reflect, that, like the poor credulous mother, who listened complacently to her sea-faring son whilst using a Sinbad's license of romancing, but gravely reproved him for the sin of untruth when he told her of flying fish, or some other simple zoological fact—so Herodotus would have made careful memoranda of this Egyptian voyage had it told of men "whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders" (since, if he himself doubted about the one-eyed Arimaspians, he yet thought the legend entitled to a report), but scouted with all his energy the one great truth of the *Periplus*, and eternal monument of its reality, as a fable too monstrous for toleration. On the other hand, for us, who know its truth, and how *inevadibly* it must have haunted for months the Egyptians in the face of all their previous impressions, it ought to stand for an argument, strong "as proofs of holy writ," that the voyage did really take place. There is exactly one possibility, but a very slight one, that this truth might have been otherwise learned—learned independently; and *that* is, from the chance that those same Africans of the interior who had truly reported the Niger to Herodotus (though erroneously as a section of the Nile), might simultaneously have reported the phenomena of the sun's course. But we reply to that possible suggestion—that, in fact, it could scarcely have happened. Many other remarkable phenomena of Nigritia had *not* been reported;

* "All the Cretans are liars"—old Mediterranean proverb—Κρητες αει ψευσται.

or had been dropped out of the record as idle or worthless. Secondly, as slaves they would have obtained little credit, except when *falling in with a previous idea or belief.* Thirdly, none of these men would be derived from any place to the south of the line, still less south of the southern tropic. Generally they would belong to the northern tropic: and (that being premised) what would have been the true form of the report? Not that they had the sun on the right hand; but that sometimes he was directly vertical, sometimes on the left hand, sometimes on the right. "What, ye black villains! The sun, that never was known to change, unless when he reeled a little at seeing the anthropophagous banquet of Thyestes,—*he* to dance cotillions in this absurd way up and down the heavens,—why, crucifixion is too light a punishment for such insults to Apollo,"—so would a Greek have spoken. And, at least, if the report had survived at all, it would have been in this shape—as the report of an *uncertain* movement in the African sun.

But as a regular nautical report made to the Pharaoh of the day, as an extract from the log-book, for this reason it must be received as unanswerable evidence, as an argument that *never* can be surmounted on behalf of the voyage, that it contradicted all theories whatsoever—Greek no less than Egyptian—and was irreconcilable with all systems that the wit of men had *yet* devised [viz., two centuries before Herodotus] for explaining the solar motions. Upon this logic we will take our stand. Here is the stronghold, the citadel, of the truth. Many a thing has been fabled, many a thing carefully passed down by tradition as a fact of absolute experience, simply because it fell in with some previous fancy or prejudice of men. And even Baron Munchausen's amusing falsehoods, if examined by a logician, will uniformly be found squared or adjusted—not, indeed,

to a belief, but to a whimsical sort of plausibility, that reconciles the mind to the extravagance for the single instant that is required. If he drives up a hill of snow, and next morning finds his horse and gig hanging from the top of a church steeple, the monstrous fiction is still countenanced by the sudden thaw that had taken place in the night-time, and so far physically possible as to be removed beyond the limits of magic. And the very disgust, which revolts us in a *supplement* to the baron, that we remember to have seen, arises from the neglect of those smooth plausibilities. We are there summoned to believe blank impossibilities, without a particle of the baron's most ingenious and winning speciousness of preparation. The baron candidly admits the impossibility ; faces it ; regrets it for the sake of truth : but a *fact* is a *fact* ; and he puts it to our equity—whether we also have not met with strange events. And never in a single instance does the baron build upwards, without a massy foundation of specious physical plausibility. Whereas the fiction, if it had been a fiction, recorded by Herodotus, is precisely of that order which must have roused the *incredulus odi* in the fulness of perfection. Neither in the wisdom of man, nor in his follies, was their one resource for mitigating the disgust which would have pursued it. This powerful reason for believing the main fact of the circumnavigation—let the reader, courteous or not, if he is but the logical reader, condescend to balance in his judgment.

Other arguments, only less strong on behalf of the voyage, we will not here notice—except this one, most reasonably urged by Rennell, from his peculiar familiarity, even in that day (1799), with the currents and the prevalent winds of the Indian ocean ; viz., that such a circumnavigation of Africa was almost sure to prosper if commenced

from the Red Sea (as it was), along the *east* coast of Africa, and even more sure to fail if taken in the inverse order; that is to say, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and so down the western shore of Africa. In that order, which was peculiarly tempting for two reasons to the Carthaginian sailor or Phœnician, Rennell has shown how all the currents, the *monsoons*, &c., would baffle the navigator; whilst, taken in the opposite series, they might easily co-operate with the bold enterpriser, so as to waft him, if once starting at a proper season, almost to the Cape, before (to use Sir Bingo Binks's phrase) he could say dumpling. Accordingly, a Persian nobleman of high rank, having been allowed to commute his sentence of capital punishment for that of sailing round Africa, did actually fail from the cause developed by Rennell. Naturally he had a Phœnician crew, as the king's best nautical subjects. Naturally they preferred the false route by Gibraltar. Naturally they failed. And the nobleman, returning from transportation before his time, as well as *re infectâ*, was executed.

But (ah, villanous word!) some ugly objector puts in his oar, and demands to know—why, if so vast an event had actually occurred, it could have ever been forgotten, or at all have faded? to this we answer briefly, what properly ought to form a separate section in our notice of Herodotus. The event was *not* so vast as we, with our present knowledge of Africa, should regard it.

This is a very interesting aspect of the subject. We laugh long and loud when we hear Des Cartes (great man as he was) laying it down amongst the golden rules for guiding his studies, that he would guard himself against all "prejudices;" because we know that when a prejudice of any class whatever is seen *as* such, when it is recognised *for* a prejudice, from that moment it ceases to *be* a preju-

dice. Those are the true baffling prejudices for man, which he never suspects for prejudices. How widely, from the truisms of experience, could we illustrate this truth! But we abstain. We content ourselves with this case. Even Major Rennell, starting semi-consciously from his own previous knowledge (the fruit of researches pursued through many centuries after Herodotus), lays down an Africa at least ten times too great for meeting the Greek idea. Unavoidably Herodotus knew the Mediterranean dimensions of Africa; else he would have figured it to himself as an island, equal perhaps to Greece, Macedon, and Thrace. As it was, there is no doubt to us, from many indications, that the Libya of Herodotus, after all, did not exceed the total bulk of Asia Minor carried eastwards to the Tigris. But there is not such an awful corrupter of truth in the whole world—there is not such an unconquerable enslaver of men's minds, as the blind instinct by which they yield to the ancient root-bound trebly-anchored prejudications of their childhood and original belief. Misconceive us not, reader. We do not mean that, having learned such and such doctrines, afterwards they cling to them by affection. Not at all. We mean that, duped by a word and the associations clinging to it, they cleave to certain notions, not from any partiality to them, but because this pre-occupation intercepts the very earliest dawn of a possible conception or conjecture in the opposite direction. The most tremendous error in human annals is of that order. It has existed for seventeen centuries in strength; and is not extinct, though public in its action, as upon another occasion we shall show. In this case of Africa, it was not that men resisted the truth according to the ordinary notion of a "prejudice;" it was that every commentator in succession upon Herodotus, coming to the case with the fullest knowledge that Africa

was a vast continent, ranging far and wide in both hemispheres, unconsciously slipped into the feeling, that this had always been the belief of men; possibly some might a little fall short of the true estimate, some a little exceed it; but that, on the whole, it was at least as truly figured to men's minds as either of the two other continents. Accordingly, one and all have presumed a bulk for the Libya of Herodotus absolutely at war with the whole indications. And, if they had once again read Herodotus under the guiding light furnished by a blank denial of this notion, they would have found a meaning in many a word of Herodotus, such as they never suspected whilst trying it only from one side. In this blind submission to a prejudice of words and clustering associations, Rennell also shares.

It will be retorted, however, that the long *time* allowed by Herodotus for the voyage argues a corresponding amplitude of dimensions. Doubtless a time upwards of two years, is long for a modern *Periplus*, even of that vast continent. But Herodotus knew nothing of monsoons, or trade-winds, or currents: he allowed nothing for these accelerating forces, which were enormous, though allowing fully [could any Greek have neglected to allow?] for all the retarding forces. Daily advances of thirty-three miles at most; nightly reposes, of necessity to men without the compass; above all, a *coasting* navigation, searching (if it were only for water) every nook and inlet, bay, and river's mouth, except only where the winds or currents might violently sweep them past these objects. Then we are to allow for a long stay on the shore of Western Africa, for the sake of reaping, or getting reaped by natives, a wheat harvest—a fact which strengthens the probability of the voyage, but diminishes the disposable time which Herodotus would use as the exponent of the space. We must remember

the *want of sails aloft* in ancient vessels, the awkwardness of their build for fast sailing, and, above all, their cautious policy of never tempting the deep, unless when the wind would not be denied. And, in the meantime, all the compensatory forces of air and water, so utterly unsuspected by Herodotus, we must subtract from *his* final summation of the effective motion, leaving for the actual measure of the sailing, as inferred by Herodotus—consequently for the measure of the *virtual* time, consequently of the African space, as only to be collected from the time so corrected—a very small proportion indeed, compared with the results of a similar voyage, even by the Portuguese, about A.D. 1500. To Herodotus we are satisfied that Libya (disarming it of its power over the world's mind, in the pompous name of Africa) was not bigger than the true Arabia, or even Spain, as known to ourselves.

And hence, also, by a natural result, the obliteration of this *Periplus* from the minds of men. It accomplished no great service as men judged. It put a zone about a large region undoubtedly; but what sort of a region? A mere worthless wilderness, here θηριωδης, dedicated by the gods to wild beasts, there ὀμμωδης, trackless from sands, and everywhere fountainless, arid, scorched (as they believed) in the interior. Subtract Egypt, as not being part, and to the world of civilisation at that time Africa must have seemed a worthless desert, except for Cyrene and Carthage, its two choice gardens, already occupied by Phœnicians and Greeks. This, by the way, suggests a new consideration, viz., that even the Mediterranean extent of Africa must have been unknown to Herodotus—since all beyond Carthage, as Mauritania, &c., would wind up into a small inconsiderable tract, as being *dispuncted* by no great states or colonies.

Therefore it was that this most interesting of all circum-

navigations at the present day did virtually and could not but perish as a vivid record. It measured a region which touched no man's prosperity. It recorded a discovery for which there was no permanent appreciator. A case exists at this moment, in London, precisely parallel. There is a chart of New Holland still preserved among the κειμηλια of the British Museum, which exhibits a *Periplus* of that vast region, from some navigator, almost by three centuries prior to Captain Cook. A rude outline of Cook's labours in that section had been anticipated at a time when it was not wanted. Nobody cared about it: value it had none, or interest; and it was utterly forgotten. That it did not also perish in the literal sense, as well as in spirit, was owing to an accident.

IV.—*The Geographical* AKTÉ *of Greece.*

We had intended to transfer, for the use of our readers, the diagram imagined by Niebuhr in illustration of this idea. But our growing exorbitance from our limits warns us to desist. Two points only we shall notice:—1. That Niebuhr—not the traveller, as might have been expected, but his son, the philosophic historian—first threw light on this idea, which had puzzled multitudes of honest men. Here we see the same singularity as in the case of Rennell; in that instance a man without a particle of Greek "whipped" (to speak *Kentuckicè*) whole crowds of drones who had more Greek than they could turn to any good account. And, in the other instance, we see a sedentary scholar, travelling chiefly between his study and his bed-room, doing the work that properly belonged to active travellers. 2. Though we have already given one illustration of an *Akté* in Asia Minor, it may be well to mention as

another, the vast region of Arabia. In fact, to Herodotus the tract of Arabia and Syria, on the one hand, made up one akté (the southern) for the Persian empire ; Asia Minor, with part of Armenia, made up another akté (the western) for the same empire ; the two being at right angles, and both abutting on imaginary lines drawn from different points of the Euphrates.

V.—*Chronology of Herodotus.*

The commentator of Herodotus, who enjoys the reputation of having best unfolded his chronology, is the French President Bouhier. We cannot say that this opinion coincides with our own. There is a lamentable imbecility in all the chronological commentators of two opposite tendencies. Either they fall into that folly of drivelling infidelity, which shivers at every fresh revelation of geology, and every fresh romance of fabulous chronology, as fatal to religious truths ; or, with wiser feelings but equal silliness, they seek to protect Christianity by feeble parryings, from a danger which exists only for those who never had any rational principles of faith ; as if the mighty *spiritual* power of Christianity were to be thrown upon her defence, as often as any old woman's legend from Hindostan (see Bailly's *Astronomie*), or from Egypt (see the whole series of chronological commentators on Herodotus), became immeasurably extravagant, and exactly in proportion to that extravagance. Amongst these latter chronologers, perhaps Larcher is the most false and treacherous. He affects a tragical start as often as he rehearses the traditions of the Egyptian priests, and assumes a holy shuddering. "Eh quoi ! Ce seroit donc ces gens-là, qui auroient osé insulter à notre sainte religion !" But, all the while, beneath his

mask the reader can perceive, not obscurely, a perfidious smile; as on the face of some indulgent mother, who affects to menace with her hand some favourite child at a distance, whilst the present subject of a stranger's complaint, but, in fact, ill disguises her foolish applause to its petulance.

Two remarks only we shall allow ourselves upon this extensive theme, which, if once entered in good earnest, would go on to a length more than commensurate with all the rest of our discussion.

1. The three hundred and thirty kings of Egypt, who were interposed by the Egyptian priests, between the endless dynasty of the gods, and the pretty long dynasty of real kings (the Shepherds, the Pharaohs, &c.), are upon this argument to be objected as mere unmeaning fictions, viz., *that they did nothing.* This argument is reported as a fact (*not as* an argument of rejection), by Herodotus himself, and reported from the volunteer testimony of the priests themselves; so that the authority for the number of kings is also the authority for their inertia. Can there be better proof needed, that they were men of straw, got up to colour the legend of a prodigious antiquity? The reign of the gods was felt to be somewhat equivocal, as susceptible of allegoric explanations. So this long human dynasty is invented to furnish a substantial basis for the chronology. Meantime, the whole three hundred and thirty are such absolute *fainéans*, that confessedly not one act—not one monument of art or labour—is ascribed to their auspices; whilst *every one* of the real unquestionable sovereigns, coinciding with known periods in the tradition of Greece, or with undeniable events in the Divine simplicity of the Hebrew Scriptures, is memorable for some warlike act, some munificent institution, or some almost imperishable monument of architectural power.

2. But weaker even than the fabling spirit of these genealogical inanities, is the idle attempt to explode them, by turning the years into days. In this way, it is true, we get rid of pretensions to a cloudy antiquity, by wholesale clusters. The moonshine and the fairy-tales vanish—but how? To leave us all in a moonless quagmire of substantial difficulties, from which (as has been suggested more than once) there is no extrication at all; for if the diurnal years are to reconcile us to the three hundred and thirty kings, what becomes of the incomprehensibly short reigns (not averaging above two or three months for each), on the long basis of time assumed by the priests; and this in the most peaceful of realms, and in fatal contradiction to another estimate of the priests, by which the kings are made to tally with as many γενεαι, or generations of men? Herodotus, and doubtless the priests, understood a generation in the sense then universally current, agreeably to which, three generations were equated to a century.

But the questions are endless which grow out of Herodotus. Pliny's Natural History has been usually thought the greatest Encyclopædia of ancient learning. But we hold that Herodotus furnishes by much the largest basis for vast commentaries revealing the archæologies of the human race: whilst, as the eldest of prose writers, he justifies his majestic station as a brotherly assessor on the same throne with Homer.

PLATO'S REPUBLIC.

There is no reader who has not heard of Solon's apologetic distinction between the actual system of laws, framed by himself for the Athenian people, under his personal knowledge of the Athenian temper, and that better system which he *would* have framed in a case, where either the docility of the national character had been greater, or the temptations to insubordination had been less. Something of the same distinction must be taken on behalf of Plato, between the ideal form of Civil Polity which he contemplated in the ten books of his Republic, and the practical form which he contemplated in the thirteen books of his Legislative System.* In the former work he supposes himself to be instituting an independent state on such principles as were philosophically best; in the latter, upon the assumption, that what might be the best as an abstraction, was not always the best as adapted to a perverse human nature, nor, under ordinary circumstances, the most likely to be durable,—he professes to make a compromise between his sense of duty as a philosopher, and his sense of expe-

* *Thirteen books*:—There are twelve books of the *Laws*; but the closing book, entitled the *Epinomis* or Supplement to *the Laws*, adds a thirteenth. I have thought it convenient to designate the entire work by the collective name of the *Legislative System*.

dience as a man of the world. Like Solon, he quits the normal for the attainable; and from the ideal man, flexible to all the purposes of a haughty philosophy, he descends in his subsequent speculations to the refractory Athenian such as he really was in the generation of Pericles. And this fact gives a great value to the more abstract work; since no inferences against Greek sentiment or Greek principles could have been drawn from a work applying itself to Grecian habits as Plato found them; or none which it would not be easy to evade. "This," it would have been said, "is not what Plato approved—but what Plato conceived to be the best compromise with the difficulties of the case under the given civilisation." Now, on the contrary, we have Plato's view of absolute optimism, the true *maximum perfectionis* for social man, in a condition openly assumed to be modelled after a philosopher's ideal. There is no work, therefore, from which profounder draughts can be derived of human frailty and degradation, under its highest intellectual expansion, previously to the rise of Christianity. Just one century subsequent to the birth of Plato, which, by the most plausible chronology, very little preceded the death of Pericles, the great Macedonian expedition under Alexander was proceeding against Persia. By that time the bloom of Greek civility had a little faded. The war itself, taken in connexion with the bloody feuds that succeeded it amongst the great captains of Alexander, gave a shock to the civilisation of Greece; so that, upon the whole, it would not be possible to fix on any epoch more exemplifying Greek intellect, or Greek refinement, than precisely that youth of Plato, which united itself by immediate consecutive succession to the most brilliant section in the administration of Pericles. It was, in fact, throughout the course of the Peloponnesian war—the one sole war that divided the

whole household of Greece against itself, giving motive to efforts, and dignity to personal competitions—contemporary with Xenophon and the younger Cyrus, during the manhood of Alcibiades, and the declining years of Socrates—amongst such coevals and such circumstances of war and revolutionary truce—that Plato passed his fervent youth. The bright sunset of Pericles still burned in the Athenian heavens; the gorgeous tragedy and the luxuriant comedy, so recently created, were now in full possession of the Athenian stage; the city was yet fresh from the hands of its creators—Pericles and Phidias; the fine arts were towering into their meridian altitude; and about the period when Plato might be considered an adult *sui juris*, that is, just four hundred and ten years before the birth of Christ, the Grecian intellect might be said to culminate in Athens. Any more favourable era for estimating the Greek character, cannot, we presume, be suggested. For, although personally there might be a brighter constellation gathered about Pericles, at a date twenty-five years antecedent to this era of Plato's maturity, still, as regarded the results upon the collective populace of Athens, *that* must have become most conspicuous and palpable in the generation immediately succeeding. The thoughtfulness impressed by the new theatre, the patriotic fervour generated by the administration of Pericles, must have revealed themselves most effectually after both causes had been operating through one entire generation. And Plato, who might have been kissed as an infant by Pericles, but never could have looked at that great man with an eye of intelligent admiration—to whose ear the name of Pericles must have sounded with the same echo from the past as that of Pitt to the young men of our British Reform Bill—could yet better appreciate the elevation which he had impressed upon the Athenian character,

than those who, as direct coevals of Pericles, could not gain a sufficient offing or "elongation" from his beams to appreciate his lustre. My inference is—that Plato, more even than Pericles, saw the consummation of the Athenian intellect, and witnessed more than Pericles himself the civilisation wrought by Pericles.

This consideration gives a value to every sentiment expressed by Plato. The Greek mind was then more intensely Greek than at any subsequent period. After the period of Alexander, it fell under exotic influences—alien and Asiatic, regal and despotic. One hundred and fifty years more brought the country (*i.e.*, Macedon as well as Greece) under the Roman yoke; after which the true Grecian intellect never again spoke a natural or genial language. The originality of the Athenian mind had exhaled under the sense of constraint. But as yet, and throughout the life of Plato, Greece was essentially Grecian, and Athens radically Athenian.

With respect to those particular works of Plato which concern the constitution of governments, there is this special reason for building upon *them* any inferences as to the culture of Athenian society—that probably these are the most direct emanations from the Platonic intellect, the most purely representative of Plato individually, and the most prolonged or sustained effort of his peculiar mind. It is customary to talk of a Platonic philosophy as a coherent whole, that may be gathered by concentration from his disjointed dialogues. My belief is, that no such systematic whole exists. Fragmentary views are all that remain in his works. The four minds, from whom we have received the nearest approximation to an orbicular system, or total body of philosophy, are those of Aristotle, of Des Cartes, of Leibnitz, and lastly, of Immanuel Kant. All these men

have manifested an ambition to complete the cycle of their philosophic speculations; but, for all that, not one of them has come near to his object. How much less can any such cycle or systematic whole be ascribed to Plato! His dialogues are a succession of insulated essays, upon problems just then engaging the attention of thoughtful men in Greece. But we know not how much of these speculations may really belong to those interlocutors, into whose mouths so large a proportion is thrown; nor have we any means of discriminating between such doctrines as were put forward by way of tentative explorations, or trials of dialectic adroitness, and on the other hand, such as Plato adopted in sincerity of heart, whether originated by his master or by himself. There is, besides, a very awkward argument for suspending our faith in any one doctrine as rigorously Platonic. We are assured beforehand, that the intolerance of the Athenian people in the affair of Socrates, must have damped the speculating spirit in all philosophers who were not prepared to fly from Athens. It is no time to be prating as a philosophical free-thinker, when bigotry takes the shape of judicial persecution. That one cup of poison administered to Socrates, must have quenched the bold spirit of philosophy for centuries. This is a reasonable presumption. But the same argument takes another and a more self-confessing form in another feature of Plato's writings; viz., in his affectation of a double doctrine—esoteric, the private and confidential form authorized by his final ratification; and exoteric, which was but another name for impostures with which he duped those who might else have been calumniators. But what a world of falsehoods is wrapped up in this pretence! First of all, what unreflecting levity to talk of this twofold doctrine as at all open to the human mind on questions taken gene-

rally! How many problems of a philosophic nature can be mentioned, in which it would be at all possible to maintain this double current, flowing collaterally, of truth absolute and truth plausible? No such double view would be often available under any possible sacrifice of truth. Secondly, if it were, how thoroughly would that be to adopt and renew those theatrical pretences of the itinerant *Sophistæ*, or encyclopædic hawkers of knowledge, whom elsewhere and so repeatedly, Plato, in the assumed person of Socrates, had contemptuously exposed. Thirdly, in a philosophy by no means remarkable for its opulence in ideas, which moves at all only by its cumbrous superfluity of words (partly in disguise of which, under the forms of conversation, we believe the mode of dialogue to have been first adopted), how was this double expenditure to be maintained? What tenfold contempt it impresses upon a man's poverty, where he himself forces it into public exposure by insisting on keeping up a double establishment in the town and in the country, at the very moment that his utmost means are below the decent maintenance of one very humble household! Or let the reader represent to himself the miserable *charlatanerie* of a gasconading secretary affecting to place himself upon a level with Cæsar, by dictating to three amanuenses at once, when the slender result makes it painfully evident, that to have kept one moving in any respectable manner would have bankrupted his resources. But, lastly, when this affectation is maintained of a double doctrine, by what test is the future student to distinguish the one from the other? Never was there an instance in which vanity was more short-sighted. It would not be possible by any art or invention more effectually to extinguish our interest in a scheme of philosophy—by summarily extinguishing all hope of ever separating the true from the

false, the authentic from the spurious—than by sending down to posterity this claim to a secret meaning lurking behind a mask. If the key to the distinction between true and false is sent down with the philosophy, then what purpose of concealment is attained? Who is it that is duped? On the other hand, if it is *not* sent down, what purpose of truth is attained? Who is it, then, that is *not* duped? And if Plato relied upon a confidential successor as the oral expounder of his secret meaning, how blind must he have been to the course of human contingencies, who should not see that this tradition of explanation could not flow onwards through four successive generations without inevitably suffering some fatal interruption; after which, once let the chain be dropped, the links would never be recoverable, as, in effect, we now see to be the result. No man can venture to say, amidst many blank contradictions and startling inconsistencies, which it is that represents the genuine opinion of Plato; which the ostensible opinion for evading a momentary objection, or for opposition, or perhaps simply for prolonging the conversation. And, upon the whole, this one explosion of vanity, of hunger-bitten penury affecting the riotous superfluity of wealth—has done more to check the interest in Plato's opinions than all his mysticism and all his vagueness of purpose. In other philosophers, even in him who professedly adopted the rule of "σκότισον," "*darken your meaning*," there is some chance of arriving at the real doctrine, because, though hidden, it has unity of idea. But with a man who avows a purpose of double-dealing, to understand is, after all, the smallest part of your task. Having perhaps with difficulty framed a coherent construction for the passage, having with much pains entitled yourself to say,—"Now I comprehend,"—next comes the question, *What is it* you comprehend? Why, perhaps a doctrine

which the author secretly abjured; in which he was misleading the world; in which he put forward a false opinion for the benefit of his own consistency, and for the sake of securing safety to those in which he revealed what he supposed to be the truth.

There is, however, in the following political hypothesis of Plato, less real danger from this conflict of two meanings, than in those cases where he treated a great pre-existing problem of speculation. Here, from the practical nature of the problem, and its more *ad libitum* choice of topics, he was not forced upon those questions which, in a more formal theorem, he could not uniformly evade. But one difficulty will always remain for the perplexity of the student—viz., in what point it was that Socrates had found it dangerous to tamper with the religion of Greece, if Plato could safely publish the free-thinking objections which are here avowed. In other respects, the *Ideal Republic* of Plato will surprise those who have connected with the very name of Plato a sort of starry elevation, and a visionary dedication to what is pure. Of purity, in any relation, there will be found no traces: of visionariness, in the sense of ideas undefined, more than enough.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The *First* book of the Polity, or general form of Commonwealths, is occupied with a natural, but very immethodical discussion of justice. Justice—as one of those original problems unattainable in solitary life, which drove men into social union, for the sake of winning by their collective forces that which else was inaccessible to individual efforts—should naturally occupy the preliminary place in a spe-

culation upon the possible varieties of government. Accordingly, some later authors, like Mr. Godwin in his *Political Justice*, have transmuted the whole question as to forms of social organization into a transcendent question of Justice; and how it can be fairly distributed in reconcilement with the necessities of a practical administration or the general prejudices of men. A state (a commonwealth, for example) is not simply a head or supremacy in relation to the other members of a political union; it is also itself a body amongst other co-equal bodies—one republic amongst other coordinate republics. War may happen to arise; taxation; and many other burdens. How are these to be distributed so as not to wound the fundamental principle of justice? They may be apportioned unequally. That would be injustice without a question. There may be scruples of conscience upon war, or upon contributions to war. That would be a more questionable case; but it would demand a consideration, and must be brought into harmony with the general theory of justice. For the supreme problem in such a speculation seems to be this—how to draw the greatest amount of strength from civil union; how to carry the powers of man to the greatest height of improvement, or to place him in the way of such improvement; and lastly, to do all this in reconciliation with the least possible infringement or suspension of man's individual rights. Under any view, therefore, of a commonwealth, nobody will object to the investigation of justice—as a proper basis for the whole edifice. But the student is dissatisfied with this Platonic introduction—1st, as being too casual and occasional, consequently as not prefiguring in its course the order of those speculations which are to follow; 2dly, as too verbal and hair-splitting; 3dly, that it does not connect itself with what follows. It stands inertly and uselessly before the

main disquisition as a sort of vestibule, but we are not made to see any transition from one to the other.

Meantime, the outline of this nominal introduction is what follows :—Socrates has received an invitation to a dinner-party [δειπνον] from the son of Cephalus, a respectable citizen of Athens. This citizen, whose sons are grown up, is naturally himself advanced in years ; and is led, therefore, reasonably to speak of old age. This he does in the tone of Cicero's Cato ; contending that, upon the whole, it is made burdensome only by men's vices. But the value of his testimony is somewhat lowered by the fact, that he is moderately wealthy ; and secondly (which is more important), that he is constitutionally moderate in his desires. Towards the close of his remarks, he says something on the use of riches in protecting us from injurious treatment—whether of our own towards others, or of others towards us.

This calls up Socrates, who takes occasion to put a general question as to the nature and definition of injustice. Cephalus declines the further prosecution of the dialogue for himself, but devolves it on his son. Some of the usual Attic word-sparring follows—of which this may be taken as a specimen :—A definition having been given of justice in a tentative way by Socrates himself, as though it might be that quality which restores to every one what we know to be his own ; and the eldest son having adopted this definition as true, Socrates then objects the cases in which, having borrowed a man's sword, we should be required deliberately to replace it in the hands of the owner, knowing him to be mad. An angry interruption takes place from one of the company called Thrasymachus. This is appeased by the obliging behaviour of Socrates. But it produces this effect upon what follows, that, in fact, from one illustration adduced by this Thrasymachus, the whole subsequent

discussion arises. He, amongst other arts which he alleges in evidence of his views, cites that of government; and by a confusion between mere municipal law and the moral law of universal obligation, he contends that in every land that is just which promotes the interest or wishes of the governing power—be it king, nobles, or people as a body. Socrates opposes him by illustrations, such as Xenophon's *Memorabilia* have made familiar to all the world, drawn from the arts of cooks, shepherds, pilots, &c.; and the book closes with a general defence of justice as requisite to the very existence of political states; since without some trust reposed in each other, wars would be endless. It is also presumable, that man, if generally unjust, would be less prosperous—as enjoying less of favour from the gods; and finally, that the mind, in a temper of injustice, may be regarded as diseased; that it is less qualified for discharging its natural functions; and that thus, whether looking at bodies politic or individuals, the sum of happiness would be greatly diminished, if injustice were allowed to prevail.

BOOK THE SECOND.

In the beginning of this Book, two brothers, Glauco and Adeimantus, undertake the defence of injustice; but upon such arguments as have not even a colourable plausibility. They suppose the case that a man were possessed of the ring which conferred the privilege of invisibility; a fiction so multiplied in modern fairy tales, but which in the barren legends of the Pagan world was confined to the ring of Gyges. Armed with this advantage, they contend that every man would be unjust. But this is change only as to fact. Next, however, they suppose a change still more monstrous; viz., that moral distinctions should be so far

confounded, as that a man, practising all injustice, should pass for a man exquisitely just, and that a corresponding transfer of reputation should take place with regard to the just man. Under such circumstances, they contend that every man would hasten to be unjust; and that the unjust would reap all the honours together with all the advantages of life. From all which they infer two things—First, that injustice is not valued for anything in its own nature or essence, but for its consequences; and secondly, that it is a combination of the weak many against the few who happen to be strong, which has invested justice with so much splendour by means of written laws. It seems strange that even for a momentary effect in conversation, such trivial sophistry as this could avail. Because, if in order to represent justice and injustice as masquerading amongst men, and losing their customary effects, or losing their corresponding impressions upon men's feelings, it is necessary first of all to suppose the whole realities of life confounded, and fantastic impossibilities established, no result at all from such premises could be worthy of attention; and, after all, the particular result supposed does not militate in any respect against the received notions as to moral distinctions. Injustice might certainly pass for justice; and as a second case, injustice, having a bribe attached to it, might blind the moral sense to its true proportions of evil. But that will not prove that injustice can ever fascinate *as* injustice (for in the case supposed it prospers as bribery); or again, that it will ever prosper as regards its effects in that undisguised manifestation. If, to win upon men's esteem, it must privately wear the mask of justice; or if, to win upon men's practice, it must previously connect itself with artificial bounties of honour and preferment—all this is but another way of

pronouncing an eulogy on justice. It is agreeable, however, to find, that these barren speculations are soon made to lead into questions more directly pertinent to the constitution of bodies politic. Socrates observes that large models are best fitted to exhibit the course of any action or process; and therefore he shifts the field of illustration from the individual man, armed or not with the ring of Gyges, to regular commonwealths; in which it is, and in their relations to other commonwealths or to their own internal parts, that he proposes to answer these wild sophisms on the subject of justice as a moral obligation.

Socrates lays the original foundation of all political states in want or reciprocal necessity. And of human necessity the very primal shape is that which regards our livelihood. Here it is interesting to notice what is the *minimum* which Plato assumes for the "outfit" (according to our parliamentary term) of social life. We moderns, for the mounting a colony or other social establishment, are obliged generally to assume five heads of expenditure; viz., 1. food; 2. shelter, or housing; 3. clothing; 4. warmth (or fuel); 5. light. But the two last we owe to our colder climate, and (which is a consequence of that) to our far more unequal distribution of daylight. As the ancients knew nothing of our very short days, so, on the other hand, they knew nothing, it is true, of our very long ones; and at first sight it might seem as if the one balanced the other. But it is not so; sunrise and sunset were far more nearly for the ancients, than they ever can be for nations in higher latitudes. coincident with the periods of retiring to rest and rising; and thus it was that they obtained another advantage—that of evading much call for fuel. Neither artificial light, nor artificial heat, was much needed in ancient times. Hot climates, often more than cold ones, require (it is true)

artificial heat after sunset. But the ancient Greeks and Romans, therefore *à fortiori* nations less refined, were in bed by sunset during the periods of their early simplicity, that is, during the periods of their poverty. The total expense in fuel amongst the Greeks, was upon a scale suited to ages in which fossil coal was an unknown staff of life; it was no more than met the simple demands of cookery, and of severe winters; these, it is true, even in Spain, nay, in Syria, are sometimes accompanied with heavy storms of snow.* But, on the other hand, the winters, if severe at times, are brief; and even so far north in Italy as Milan, the season of genial spring, and of luxuriant flowers, often commences in February. In contrast with our five requisitions of northern latitudes, which, as implying a higher (because a more provident) scale of existence, have a philosophic value, it is interesting to find Plato, under the person of Socrates, requiring only three; viz., food, clothes, and lodging. The arts, therefore, which he presumes requisite for establishing a state, are four: one occupied with the culture of the ground; one with the building of habitations; and two, ministerial to the adorning, or at least to the protecting, of the person. The ploughman before all others for our food; in the second rank, the mason for raising dwelling-houses; and, in the last place, the weaver, combined with the shoemaker, for the manufacturing our dress. These four artists, says Plato, are the very *minimum* establishment on which a city or a colony can begin to move. But a very few steps will bring us, he remarks, to a call for further arts; in particular, it will soon be found that it is a sad waste of time for any of the four already mentioned to be interrupted

* *Storms of snow*:—For an instance of a very critical fall of snow near Jerusalem, not long before our Saviour's time, see Josephus.

by the necessity of making their several tools and implements. A fifth artist will therefore be found necessary, in the character of tool-maker, in common with all the rest. A sixth and a seventh will soon be called for, in the character of shepherds and herdsmen; for if sheep and oxen are not indispensable as food, they are so as furnishing the leather required by the shoemaker. And lastly, merchants, for the purpose of exporting the surplus products, and of importing such as are defective, together with resident retailers of all articles in household use, are contemplated as completing the establishment. The gradual accession of luxuries in every class is next presumed as what would follow in general, but would not be allowed in Plato's republic; and as the increase of population will require additional territory (though it is an oversight not to have assigned from the first the quantity of soil occupied, and the circumstances of position in regard to neighbours), this will make an opening for war; and that again for a regular class of men dedicated to the arts of attack and defence. It is singular that Plato should thus arbitrarily lay his ground of war in aggressive principles; because, if he assumed his territory spacious enough, and the expansion of population as slow as it really was in Greece, the case in which he finally plants his necessity for war might not occur until the new state should be rich enough to find, in the difficulty supposed, a case for throwing off colonies, rather than for unprovoked attacks on neighbouring states. It is remarkable, however, that Plato, a pagan writer, makes war a subsequent and ministerial phenomenon in civil societies; whereas Hobbes, nominally a Christian, makes the belligerent condition to be that transcendent and original condition of man out of which society itself arose.

War, however, has begun; and soldiers, as a mercenary

class, are henceforwards required. Upon which Plato unfolds his ideas as to the proper qualifications of a soldier. Of course he insists upon courage, athletic powers of body in general (qualifications so pre-eminently required before the invention of fire-arms *), and especially upon the power of speed and agility. But it is singular, that in describing the temperament likely to argue courage, he insists upon irascibility; whereas, with far more truth of philosophy, his pupil Aristotle, in after years, speaks contemptuously of all courage founded upon anger, as generally spurious in its nature, and liable to the same suspicion as that which is founded upon intoxication.

It is upon this occasion, and in connexion with the education of this state soldiery, as a professional class needing to be trained expressly for a life of adventurous service and of hardship, that Plato introduces his celebrated doctrine imputing mischievous falsehood to the poets. The mythology of paganism, it is needless to say, represented the gods under characters the most hideous and disgusting. But the main circumstances in these representations, according to Plato, are mere fictions of Hesiod and of Homer. Strange, indeed, that Plato should ascribe to any poets whatever, so prodigious a power as that of having created a national religion, for the religion of paganism was not something independent of the mythology. It was wholly involved in the mythology. Take away the mythologic legends, and you take away all the objects of worship. The characteristics

* "*Fire-arms:*"—It is very true that the essential principle distinguishing fire-arms, viz., their application to *distant* warfare, making men independent of personal strength, was found in slingers and archers. But these arms of the martial service were always in some disrepute throughout Greece, even Hercules (in the *Herc. Furens*) is described by Euripides as subject to ridicule and reproach from Lycus, his enemy, on account of his having resorted to archery.

by which Latona is distinguished from Ceres, Apollo from Mercury, Diana from Minerva, Hebe from Aurora, all vanish, and leave mere nonentities, if the traditional circumstances of their theogony and history are laid aside as fabulous. Besides, if this could be surmounted, and if Plato could account for all the tribes of Hellas having adopted what he supposes to be the reveries of two solitary poets, how could he account for the general agreement in these traditions of other distant nations, who never heard so much as the names of the two Greek poets, nor could have read them if they had? The whole speculation is like too many in Plato—without a shadow of coherency; and at every angle presenting some fresh incongruity. The fact really was, that the human intellect had been for some time outgrowing its foul religions; clamorously it began to demand some change; but how little it was able to effect that change for itself, is evident from no example more than that of Plato: for he, whilst dismissing as fables some of the grosser monstrosities which the pagan Pantheon offered, loaded in effect that deity, whom he made a concurrent party to his own schemes for man, with vile qualities, quite as degrading as any which he removed; and in effect so much the worse, as regarded the result, because, wanting the childish monstrosities of the mythologic legends, they had no benefit from any allegoric interpretations in the background. Thus cruelty and sensuality, if they happen to fall in with this pagan philosopher's notions of state utility, instantly assume a place in his theories; and thence is transferred upon the deities, who are supposed to sanction this system, a far deeper taint of moral pollution than that which, being connected with extravagant *mythi*, might provoke an enlightened mind to reject it with incredulity, or to accept it as purely symbolic. Meantime, it is re-

markable that Plato should connect this reform in education specially with his soldiers; and still more so, when we understand his reason. It was apparently on two grounds that he fancied the pagan superstitions injurious to a class of men whom it was important to keep clear of panics. First, on an argument derived from the Hades of the poets, Plato believed the modes of punishment exhibited by these poets to be too alarming, and likely to check by intimidation that career of violence which apparently he thinks requisite in a soldier. Surely he might have spared his anxiety; for if, in any quarter of its barren superstitions, paganism betrayed its impoverished fancy, it was in its pictures of Tartarus, where, besides that the forms of punishment are, 1*st*, so scanty, and applied only to monstrous offences; 2*d*, so ludicrous, they are, 3*d*, all of them ineffectual for terror, were it only by the general impression conveyed that they are allegoric, and meant to be allegoric. Secondly, Plato seems to have had in his thoughts those panic terrors which sometimes arose from the belief that superior beings suddenly revealed themselves in strange shapes;—both in Roman and Grecian experience, these fancied revelations, like the Christian revelation of St. Iago to the Spanish host, had produced unexpected victories, but also unexpected flights. He argues, accordingly, against the possibility of a god adopting any metamorphosis; but upon the weak dialectic argument, weaker than a cobweb to any superstitious heart, that a celestial being would not leave a better state for a worse. How visionary to suppose that any mind previously inclined to shadowy terrors, and under the operation of solitude, of awful silence, and of wild grotesque scenery in forests or mountains, would be charmed into sudden courage by an *à priori* little conundrum of the logic school! Oh! philosopher, placed by the side of a simple-

hearted honest rustic, what a fool dost thou appear! And after all, if such evils arose from familiarity with the poets, and on that account the soldiery was to be secluded from all such reading—how were they to be saved from the contagion of general conversation with their fellow-citizens? Or, again, on foreign expeditions, how were they to be sequestered from such traditions as were generally current, and were everywhere made the subject of festal recitations, or prelections, or of national music?

In the midst of these impracticable solicitudes for the welfare of his soldiers, Plato does not overlook the probability that men trained to violence may mutiny, and (being consciously the sole depositaries of the public weapons and skill, as well as originally selected for superior promise of strength) may happen to combine, and to turn their arms against their fellow-citizens. It is painful to see so grave a danger dismissed so carelessly—*tantamne rem tam negligenter?* The sole provision which Plato makes against the formidable danger, is by moral precepts, impressing on the soldier kindness and affability to those whom it was his professional mission to protect. But such mere sanctions of decorum or usage—how weak must they be found to protect any institution merely human, against a strong interest moving in an adverse direction! The institutions of Romulus, in a simple and credulous age, had the consecration (if imaginary, yet, beyond a doubt, universally believed) of heaven itself;—a real sanctity guarded the institutions of Rome, which yet rocked and quaked for centuries under the conflicting interests of the citizens. But a philosopher's republic, in an age of philosophy and free-thinking, must repose upon human securities. Show any order of men a strong change setting in upon the current of their civil interests, and they will soon be led to see a

corresponding change in their duties;—not to mention that the sense of duty must be weak at all times amongst men whom Plato supposes expressly trained to acts of violence, whom he seeks to wean from the compunctious scruples of religion, and whose very service and profession had its first origin in acknowledged rapacity. Thus, by express institution of Plato, and by his own forecasting, had the soldiery arisen. Thus had the storm been called up; and it would be too late to bid it wheel this way or that, after its power had been consciously developed, and the principles which should control this power were found to be nothing more than the ancient intentions of a theoretic founder, or the particular interests of a favoured class. Besides, it will be seen further on, that the soldiers are placed under peculiar disadvantages —they are to possess nothing; and thus, in addition to the strong temptation of conscious power, they are furnished with a second temptation in their painful poverty, contrasted with the comparative wealth of the cowardly citizens whom they protect; and finally, with a third temptation (which also furnished an excuse), in the feeling that they are an injured class.

BOOK THE THIRD.

Plato is neither methodic nor systematic; he has neither that sort of order which respects the connexion of what he teaches as a thing to be understood, nor that which respects its connexion as a thing which is to be realized—neither that which concerns the *ratio cognoscendi* (to adopt a great distinction revived by Leibnitz from the schoolmen), nor that, on the other hand, which regards the *ratio essendi*. This last neglect he could not have designed; the other perhaps he did. And the very form of dialogue or conversations was probably adopted to intimate as much. Be that as it

may, we look in vain for any such distribution of the subject as should justify the modern division into separate books. The loose order of colloquial discussion, sometimes going back, sometimes leaping forward with impatient anticipation, and then again anxiously resuming a topic insufficiently examined—such is the law of succession by which the general theme is slowly advanced, and its particular heads are casually unfolded.

Accordingly, in this third book, the subject of the soldiery is resumed; and the proper education for that main column of the state, on which its very existence is openly founded, engages the more circumstantial attention of Plato. The leading object kept in view, as regards the mental discipline, is to brace the mind against fear. And here, again, Plato comes back upon the poets, whom he taxes with arts of emasculation, in reference to the hardy courage which his system demands. He distributes the poets into the two great classes of narrative and dramatic; those who speak directly in their own person, like Homer;* and those who utter their sentiments as ventriloquists, throwing their voice first upon this character of a drama, next upon that. It is difficult to see what purpose Plato had in this distribution; but it is highly interesting to us of this day, because we might otherwise have supposed that, upon a point of delicacy, Plato had forborne to involve in his censure of the poets that body of great dramatists, so recently drawn into existence, and of whom two at least (Euripides and Aristophanes) were in part of their lives contemporary with himself. He does, however, expressly notice them; and, what is more

* But how like Homer? Homer, and most other classical narrative poets, move indifferently (and perhaps equally), by interchange of speeches, sometimes colloquial and gossiping, sometimes stately and haranguing. Plato forgets his Homer.

to the purpose, he applies to them his heaviest censure; though on what principle is somewhat obscure. The nominal reason for his anger is—that they proceed by means of imitation; and that even mimetically to represent woman has the effect of transfusing effeminacy, by some unexplained process, into the manners of the imitator. Now really this at the best would be too fantastic. But when we reflect on the great tragic poets of Greece, and consider that in the midst of pagan darkness the only rays of moral light are to be found in THEM, and that Milton, almost a bigot, as being a Puritan, yet with that exalted standard of scriptural truth which he carried for ever in his mind, refers to these poets, and the great theatre which they founded, for the next best thing to Christian teaching—we feel our hearts alienated from Plato. But when we also contrast with this Greek scenical morality, and its occasional elevation, the brutal, sensual, and cruel principles which we constantly find in Plato himself (more frequently, indeed, and more outrageously, than in any other pagan author of eminence), it cannot be thought unreasonable that our alienation should amount to disgust. Euripides was truly a great man, struggling for a higher light than he could find. Plato was a thorough Greek, satisfied, so far as ethics were concerned, with the light which existed, nor dreaming of anything higher. And, with respect to the Greek religion, Euripides forestalled, by twenty years, all that Plato has said; we have his words to this day, and they are much more impressive than Plato's; and probably* these very words of Euripides

* *Probably:*—more than probably, I fear: Plato, it may be suspected, cultivated the arts of petty larceny to an extent that was fa from philosophic. I said nothing, but winked at his dishonesty, when some pages back he thought proper to charge upon Homer and Hesiod the monstrous forgery of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and all

first suggested to Plato the doctrine which he so maliciously directs in this place against the very poets as a body, who, through one of their number, first gave currency to such a bold speculation, and first tried as *enfans perdus* (or the leaders of a forlorn hope), whether the timid superstition of the Athenians, and the fanaticism founded on their fear, would tolerate such innovations.

After this second sentence of exile against the poets—which we cannot but secretly trace to the jealousy of Plato, armed against that section of the Athenian *literati* most in the public favour—we are carried forward to the music of the Greeks. The soldiery are excluded from all acquaintance with any but the austerer modes. But as this is a subject still mysterious even to those who come armed with the knowledge of music as a science, and as no more than a general caution is given, this topic is not one of those which we are called on to discuss.

So slight was the Grecian circuit of education, and especially where mathematics happened to be excluded, that poetry and music apparently bound the practical encyclopædia of Plato. From the mind, therefore, he passes to the physical education. And here we find two leading cautions, of which one, at least, is built on more accurate observation of medical truths than we should have expected in the age of Plato. The first will, perhaps, not much strike the reader, for it expresses only the stern injunction upon every soldier of that temperance as to strong liquors, which in our days has descended (with what permanence

Olympus, nothing less (if the reader will believe me) than the whole Pantheon. But in fact that charge was fraudulently appropriated by Plato from a better man, viz., Herodotus, who must have been fifty years older than the philosopher. And now at this point again we find the philosopher filching from Euripides!

we fear to ask) amongst the very lowest and most suffering of human beings. It is, however, creditable to Plato, that he should have perceived the mischievous operation of inebriation upon the health and strength; for in his age, the evil of such a practice was chiefly thrown upon its moral effects,—the indecorums which it caused, the quarrels, the murderous contests, the lasting alienations, and the perilous breaches of confidence. There was little general sense of any evil in wine as a relaxer of the bodily system; as, on the other hand, neither then nor in our days is there any just appreciation of the subsidiary benefits which sometimes arise from strong liquors, or at least the clamorous call for such liquors in cold climates where the diet is cold and watery. Edmund Burke, as we remember, in his enlarged wisdom, did not overlook this case; we individually have seen too large a series of cases to doubt the fact—that in vast cities, wherever the diet of poor families happens to be thrown too much upon mere watery broths, it is a pure instinct of nature, and often a very salutary instinct, which forces them into a compensatory stimulus of alcohol. The same natural instinct for strong liquor as a partial relief, is said to be prompted by scrofula. In a Grecian climate, and with a limited population, this anomalous use of wine was not requisite; and for the soldiery, enjoying a select diet, it could least of all be needful. Plato shows his discretion, therefore, as well as the accuracy of his observation, in forbidding it. For he notices one effect which invariably follows from the addiction to strong liquors, even where as yet they have not mastered the constitutional vigour; viz., their tendency to produce a morbid sensibility to cold. We ourselves have seen a large party of stout men travelling on a morning of intense severity. Amongst the whole number, eight or nine, there were two only who did not occasionally

shiver, or express some unpleasant feeling connected with the cold; and these two, one being W. Wordsworth, were the sole water-drinkers of the party. The other caution of Plato shows even more accuracy of attention; and it is completely verified by modern experience. He is naturally anxious that the diet of the soldiery should be simple and wholesome. Now it was almost certain that those who reflected on the final object he had in view, would at once interpret his meaning as pointing to the diet of professional athletes. These men for Greece were the forerunners of the Roman gladiators; as the Greek hippodrome bisected itself into the Roman circus and amphitheatre. And as Plato's object was to secure the means of unusual strength, what more natural than to consult the experience of those who, having long had the very same end, must by this time have accumulated a large science of the appropriate means? Now, on closer examination, Plato perceived that the end was *not* the same. The gladiatorial schools had before them some day, well known and immutable, of public festivities and games, against which they were to prepare their maximum of bodily power. By the modern and by the ancient system of training, it is notorious that this preparatory discipline can be calculated to a nicety. When the "fancy" was in favour amongst ourselves, the pugilist, after entering into any legal engagement, under strong penalties, to fight on a day assigned, went into training about six weeks previously; and by the appointed time he had, through diet, exercise, sleep, all nicely adjusted to the rules of this discipline, brought up his muscular strength and his wind to the summit of what his constitution allowed. Now, certainly, in a general view, the purpose of the Platonic soldier was the same, but with this important difference—that his fighting condition was needed not on one or two days con-

secutively, but on many days, and not against a day punctually assignable, but against a season or period perhaps of months, quite indeterminate as to its beginning, end, or duration. This one difference made the whole difference; for both ancient and modern training concur in these two remarkable facts—1st, That a condition of physical power thus preternaturally produced cannot be maintained, but that uniformly a rapid relapse follows down to a condition of debility. Like the stone of Sisyphus, the more painfully and with unnatural effort a resisting object has been rolled up to a high summit, with so much the more thundering violence does it run back. The state was too intense not to be succeeded by sudden recoil. 2dly, It has been found that these spasms of preternatural tension are not without danger: apoplexies, ruptures of large blood-vessels, and other modes of sudden death, are apt to follow from the perilous tampering with the exquisite machinery of nature. This also had been the experience of Greece. Time, as a great element in all powerful changes, must be allowed in order to secure their safety. Plato, therefore, lays down as a great law for the physical discipline, that in no part of its elements, whether diet, exercise, abstinence, or gymnastic feats of strength and address, shall the ritual for the soldiers borrow anything from the schools of the *athletæ*.

In the remaining part of this Book, we have some organic arrangements proposed. First, as to the local situation—a strong military position is requisite for the soldiery, and ground must therefore be selected originally which offers this advantage. The position is to be such as may at once resist a foreign enemy and *command the other orders in the state.* Upon this ground, a body of lodgings is to be built; and in these lodgings a single regard is prescribed

to the purpose in view. Direct utility and convenience, without ostentation, are to preside in the distribution of the parts and in the architectural style; the buildings are, in fact, to unite at once the uses of a barrack and a fortress.

Next, as this fortress, distinct from the other parts of the city, when connected with arms, and the use of arms, and regular discipline, and select qualities of body, cannot but throw vast power into the hands of the soldiery, so that from being guardians of the city (as by direct title they are) they might easily become its oppressors and pillagers, universally the soldiers are to be incapable by law of holding any property whatever, without regard to quality, without regard to tenure. They can inherit nothing; they can possess nothing; neither gold nor silver, metals which must not even find an entrance into their dwellings under any pretence of custody; nor land; nor any other article; nor, finally, must they exercise a trade.

Thirdly, the administration of affairs, the executive power, and the supreme rank, are vested in the persons of the highest military officers—those who rise to that station by seniority and by extraordinary merit. This is very vaguely developed; but enough exists to show that the form of polity would be a martial aristocracy, a qualified "*stratocracy*." In this state, it is not so much true that an opening or a temptation is exposed to a martial tyranny, as that, in fact, such a tyranny is planted and rooted from the first with all the organs of administration at its disposal.

Lastly, in what way is the succession to be regulated through the several ranks and functions of the state? Not exactly, or under positive settlement, by *castes*, or an Egyptian succession of a son to his father's trade, &c. This is

denounced in the sense of an unconditional or unbending system; for it is admitted that fathers of talent may have incompetent sons, and stupid fathers may have sons of brilliant promise. But, on the whole, it seems to be assumed that, amongst the highest, or martial order, the care dedicated to the selection of the parents will insure children of similar excellence,

"Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis,"

and that amongst the artisans one average level of mediocrity will usually prevail; in which case, the advantage of personal training to the art, under a domestic tutor who never leaves him, must give such a bias to the children of the citizens for their several pursuits, as will justify the principle of hereditary succession. Still, in any case where this expectation fails, a door is constantly kept open for meeting any unusual indication of nature, by corresponding changes in the destiny of the young people. Nature, therefore, in the last resort, will regulate the succession, since the law interposes no further than in confirmation of that order in the succession which it is presumed that nature will have settled by clear expressions of fitness. But in whatever case nature indicates determinately some different predisposition in the individual, then the law gives way; for, says Plato, with emphasis, "The paramount object in my commonwealth is—that every human creature should find his proper level, and every man settle into that place for which his natural qualities have fitted him."

BOOK THE FOURTH.

These last words are not a mere flourish of rhetoric. It is, according to Plato's view, the very distinguishing feature in his polity, that each man occupies his own natural place.

Accordingly, it is the business of this Book to favour that view by a sort of fanciful analogy between what we in modern times call the four cardinal virtues, and the four capital varieties of state polity, and also between these virtues and the constituent orders in a community. This, however, may be looked upon as no step in advance towards the development of his own Republic, but rather as a halt for the purpose of looking back upon what has been already developed.

The cardinal virtues, as we see them adopted nearly four hundred years after Plato by Cicero, are prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice. The first will find its illustration, according to Plato, in the governing part of a state; the second in the defending part, or the military; the third in the relation between all the parts; but the fourth has its essence in assigning to every individual, and to every order, the appropriate right, whether that be property, duty, function, or rank. Other states, therefore, present some analogy to the three first virtues, according to the predominant object which they pursue. But his own, as Plato contends, is a model analogous to the very highest of the virtues, or justice; for that in this state only the object is kept up, as a transcendent object, of suffering no man to assume functions by mere inheritance, but to every individual assigning that office and station for which nature seems to have prepared his qualifications.

This principle, so broadly expressed, would seem to require more frequent disturbances in the series of hereditary employments than Plato had contemplated in his last Book. Accordingly, he again acknowledges the importance of vigilantly reviewing the several qualifications of the citizens. The rest of the book is chiefly occupied with a psychological inquiry into a problem sometimes discussed in modern

times (but thoroughly alien to the political problem of Plato), viz., whether, upon dividing the internal constitution of man into three elements—the irascible passions, the appetites of desire, and the rational principle—we are warranted in supposing three separate substances or hypostases in the human system, or merely three separate offices of some common substance: whether, in short, these differences are organic, or simply functional. But, besides that the discussion is both obscure and conducted by scholastic hair-splitting, it has too slight a relation to the main theme before us to justify our digressing for what is so little interesting.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

At this point of the conversation, Adeimantus, at the suggestion of another person, recalls Socrates to the consideration of that foul blot upon his theory which concerns the matrimonial connexions of the army. Not only were these to commence in a principle of unmitigated sensuality —selection of wives by public, not by individual choice, and with a single reference to physical qualities of strength, size, agility—but, which riveted the brutal tendencies of such a law, the wives, if wives they could be called, and the children that might arise from such promiscuous connexions, were to be held the common property of the order. Ties of appropriation, links of affection to this woman or to that child, were forbidden as a species of treason, and if (as in rare cases might happen) after all they should arise, the parties to such holy, but, Platonically speaking, such criminal feelings, must conceal them from all the world—must cherish them as a secret cancer at the heart, or as a martyrdom repeated in every hour. We represent marriages under the beautiful idea of unions. But these

Platonic marriages would be the foulest publication of the nuptial sanctities. We call them self-dedications of one human creature to another, through the one sole means by which nature has made it possible for any exclusive dedication to be effected. But these Platonic marriages would be a daily renovation of disloyalty, revolt, and mutual abjuration. We, from human society, transfer a reflex of human charities upon inferior natures, when we see the roe-deer, for instance, gathering not into herds like their larger and more animal brethren, the fallow-deer or the red-deer, but into families—two parents everywhere followed by their own fawns, loving and beloved. Plato, from the brutal world, and from that aspect of the brutal world in which it is most brutal, transfers a feature of savage gregariousness which would ultimately disorganize as much as it would immediately degrade. In fact, the mere feuds of jealousy, frantic hatred, and competitions of authority, growing out of such an institution, would break up the cohesion of Plato's republic within a single year. We all know of such institutions as actually realized; one case of former ages is recorded by Cæsar, Strabo, &c.; another of the present day exists amongst the ranges of the Himalaya, and has been brought by the course of our growing empire within British control. But they are, and have been, connected with the most abject condition in other respects; and probably it would be found, if such societies were not merely traversed by the glasses of philosophers in one stage of their existence, but steadily watched through a succession of generations, that it is their very necessity rapidly to decay, either by absorption into more powerful societies, built on sounder principles, or by inevitable self-extinction. Certain it is, that a society so constituted through *all* its orders, could breed no conservative or renovating impulses,

since all motives of shame, glory, emulation, would operate upon a system untuned, or pitched in a far lower key, wherever sexual love and the tenderness of exclusive preferences were forbidden by law.

Adeimantus, by thus calling for a revision of a principle so revolting, impersonates to the reader his own feelings. He, like the young Athenian, is anxious to find himself in sympathy with one reputed to be so great a philosopher; or, at least, he is unwilling to suppose himself so immeasurably removed from sympathy. Still less can he concede, or even suspend, his own principles in a point which does not concern taste, or refinement of feeling, or transitory modes of decorum, or even political interests; in all these points, however rudely shocked, he would, in modest submission to a great name, have consented to suppose himself wrong. But this scruple belongs to no such faculty of taste, or judgment, or reasoning; it belongs to the primary conscience. It belongs to a region in which no hypothetic assumptions for the sake of argument, no provisional concessions, no neutralizing compromises are ever possible. By two tests is man raised above the brutes: 1st, As a being capable of religion (which presupposes him a being endowed with reason); 2dly, As a being capable of marriage. And effectually both capacities are thus far defeated by Plato—that both have a worm, a principle of corrosion, introduced into their several tenures. He does not, indeed, formally destroy religion; he supposes himself even to purify it; but by tearing away as impostures those legends in which, for a pagan, the effectual truth of the pagan mythology, as a revelation of power, had its origin and its residence, he would have shattered it as an agency or a sanction operating on men's oaths, &c. He does not absolutely abolish marriage, but by limiting its possibility

(and how?—under two restrictions, the most insidious that can be imagined, totally abolishing it for the most honoured order of his citizens, viz., the military order; and abolishing it for those men and women whom nature had previously most adorned with her external gifts) he does his utmost to degrade marriage, even so far as it is tolerated. Whether he designed it or not, marriage is now no longer a privilege, or an honorary distinction. On the contrary, *not* to be married, is a silent proclamation that you are amongst the select children of the state—honoured by your fellow-citizens as one of their defenders—admired by the female half of the society as dedicated to a service of danger—marked out universally by the public zeal as one who possesses a physical superiority to other men—lastly, pointed out to foreigners for distinction, as belonging to a privileged class. *Are you married?* would be a question from which every man travelling abroad would shrink, unless he could say—*No.* It would be asking in effect—Are you of the inferior classes, a subaltern commanded by others, or a noble? And the result would be that, like poverty (not pauperism, but indigence or scanty means) at this day, marriage would still have its true, peculiar, and secret blessings, but, like poverty again, it would not flourish in the world's esteem; and, like that, it would prompt a system of efforts and of opinions tending universally in the very opposite direction.

Feeling—but, as a pagan, feeling not very profoundly—these truths, Adeimantus calls for explanations (secretly expecting modifications) of this offensive doctrine. Socrates, however (that is, Plato), offers none but such as are re-affirmations of the doctrine in other words, and with some little expansion of its details. The women selected as wives in these military marriages, are to be partners with the men in martial labours. This unsexual distinction will

require an unsexual training. It is, therefore, one derivative law in Plato's Republic, that a certain proportion of the young girls are to receive a masculine education, not merely assimilated to that of the men, but by personal association of both sexes in the same *palæstra*, identical with that, and going on concurrently.

To this there are two objections anticipated.

1st, That, as the gymnastic exercises of the ancients were performed in a state of nudity (to which fact, combined with the vast variety of marbles easily worked by Grecian tools, some people have ascribed the premature excellence in Greece of the plastic arts), such a personal exposure would be very trying to female modesty, and revolting to masculine sensibilities. Perhaps no one passage in the whole works of Plato so powerfully reveals his visionary state of disregard to the *actual* in human nature, and his contempt of human instincts, as this horrible transition (so abrupt and so total) from the superstitious reserve*

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* "*Superstitious reserve of Greece:*"—The possibility, however, of this Platonic dream as an idealism, together with the known practice of Sparta as a reality, are interesting as a commentary on the real tendencies of that Oriental seclusion and spurious delicacy imposed upon women, which finally died away in the Roman system of manners; by what steps, it would be very instructive to trace. Meantime, this much is evident—that precisely in a land where this morbid delicacy was enforced upon women, precisely in that land (the only one in such circumstances that ever reached an intellectual civilisation) where women were abridged in their liberty, men in their social refinement, the human race in its dignity, by the false requisitions as to seclusion, and by a delicacy spurious, hollow, and sensual, precisely there the other extreme was possible, of forcing upon women the most profligate exposure, and compelling them, amidst tears and shame, to trample on the very instincts of female dignity. So reconcilable are extremes, when the earliest extreme is laid in the unnatural.

of Grecian society, combined, as in this place it is, with levity so perfect. Plato repudiates this scruple with something like contempt. He contends that it is all custom and use which regulates such feelings, and that a new training made operative, will soon generate a new standard of propriety. Now, with our better views on such points, a plain man would tell the philosopher, that although use, no doubt, will reconcile us to much, still, after all, a better and a worse in such things does exist, previously to *any* use at all, one way or the other; and that it is the business of philosophy to ascertain this better and worse, *per se*, so as afterwards to apply the best gravitation of this moral agency, called custom, in a way to uphold a known benefit, not to waste it upon a doubtful one, still less upon one which, to the first guiding sensibilities of man, appears dangerous and shocking. If, hereafter, in these martial women, Plato should, under any dilemma, have to rely upon feminine qualities of delicacy or tenderness, he might happen to find that, with the characteristic and sexual qualities of his women, he had uprooted all the rest of their distinguishing graces; that for a single purpose, arbitrary even in *his* system, he had sacrificed a power that could not be replaced. All this, however, is dismissed as a trivial scruple.

2dly, There is another scruple, however, which weighs more heavily with Plato, and receives a more pointed answer. The objection to a female soldier or a gladiatrix might be applied on a far different principle—not to what *seems*, but to what actually *is*—not by moral sentiment, but by physiology. Habit might make us callous to the spectacle of unfeminine exposures; but habit cannot create qualities of muscular strength, hardihood, or patient endurance, where nature has denied them. These qualities may be improved, certainly, in women, as they may in men; but

still, as the improved woman in her athletic character must still be compared with the improved man, the scale, the proportions of difference, will be kept at the old level. And thus the old prejudice—that women are not meant (because not fitted by nature) for warlike tasks—will revolve upon us in the shape of a philosophic truth.

To a certain extent, Plato indirectly admits this, for (as will be seen) practically he allows for it in his subsequent institutions. But he restricts the principle of female inaptitude for war by the following suggestion :—The present broad distribution of the human species, according to which courage and the want of courage—muscular strength and weakness—are made to coincide with mere sexual distinctions, he rejects as false—not groundless—for there is a perceptible tendency to that difference—but still false for ordinary purposes. It may have a popular truth. But here, when the question is about philosophic possibilities and extreme ideals, he insists upon substituting for this popular generality a more severe valuation of the known facts. He proposes, therefore, to divide the human race upon another principle. Men, though it is the characteristic tendency of their sex to be courageous, are not all courageous ; men, though sexually it is their tendency to be strong, are not all strong : many are so ; but some, in the other extreme, are both timid and feeble : others, again, present us with a compromise between both extremes. By a parity of logic, women, though sexually and constitutionally unwarlike, pass through the same graduated range ; upon which scale, the middle qualities in *them* may answer to the lower qualities in the other sex—the higher to the middle. It is possible, therefore, to make a selection amongst the entire female population, of such as are fitted to take their share in garrison duty, in the duty of military posts

or of sentries, and even, to a certain extent, in the extreme labours of the field. Plato countenances the belief that, allowing for the difference in muscular power of women, considered as animals (a mere difference of degree), there is no essential difference, as to power and capacities, between the human male and the female. Considering the splendour of his name (weighty we cannot call a man's authority whom so few profess to have read, but *imposing* at the least), it is astonishing that in the agitation stirred by the modern brawlers, from Mary Wollstonecraft downwards, in behalf of female pretensions to power, no more use should have been drawn from the disinterested sanction of Plato to these wild innovations. However, it will strike many, that even out of that one inferiority conceded by Plato, taken in connexion with the frequent dependencies of wives and mothers upon human forbearance and human aids, in a way irreconcilable with war, those inferences might be forced one after one, which would soon restore (as a direct logical consequence) that state of female dependency, which at present nature and providence so beautifully accomplish through the gentlest of human feelings. Even Plato is obliged in practice to allow rather more on account of his one sole concession than his promises would have warranted; for he stipulates that these young gladiatrices and other figurantes in the *palæstra*, shall not be put upon difficult or dangerous trials; living in our day, he would have introduced into H. M.'s navy a class of midshipwomen; but would have exempted them, we presume, from all the night-watches, and from going aloft. This, however, might have been mere consideration for the tenderness of youth. But again, in mature life, though he orders that the wives and the children shall march with the armed force to the seat of the campaign, and on the day of battle shall make their appearance

in the rear (an unpleasant arrangement in our day of flying artillery and rocket brigade), he does not insist on their mixing in the *mêlée.* Their influence with the fighting division of the army, is to lie in their visible presence. But surely at this point, Plato overlooked the elaborate depression of that influence which his own system had been nursing. Personal presence of near female relatives, whether in storms at sea, or in battles, has always been supposed to work more mischief by distracting the commander's attention, than good by reminding him of his domestic ties. And since the loss of an East Indiaman (the Halsewell) about seventy years ago, in part ascribed to the presence of the captain's two daughters, the rules of the British service, we believe, have circumscribed the possibility of such very doubtful influences. But, in Plato's Republic, the influences must have been much more equivocal. A number of women and a number of children are supposed to be ranged on an eminence in the background. The women were undoubtedly, or had been, mothers; but to which of the children individually, and whether to any living child, was beyond their power to guess. On the assumption that any child to which, in former years, they might have given birth, were still in existence, then probably that child would be found amongst the young column of lookers-on in the rear. But, as to the men, even this conditional knowledge is impossible.* Mul-

* What I mean is—that each individual amongst the women could know for certain whether she ever had been a parent, though not whether she still continued such: but to the men even this limited knowledge was denied. Their own hypothetic interest in the young rear-guard who were snatching a holiday spectacle from the bloody conflict of their possible papas, would therefore reasonably sink below zero. It is to be hoped that Plato would not forbid the soldiers to distribute an occasional kicking amongst these young scoundrels, who would doubtless be engaged in betting on the several events as at

tiplied precautions have been taken, that it may be impossible. From the moment of birth the child has been removed to an establishment where the sternest measures are enforced to confound it beyond all power of recognition with the crowd of previous children. The object is to place a bar between this recognition and everybody; the mother and all others alike. Can a cup of water be recovered when poured off into the Danube? Equally impossible, if Plato's intentions are fulfilled, to recover traces of identification with respect to any one of the public children. The public family, therefore, of wives and children are present, but with what probable result upon the sensibilities of the men, we leave the reader to determine, when we have put him in possession of Plato's motive to all this unnatural interference with human affections. Why had he from the first applied so large a body of power (wasted power, if not utilised) to the suppression of what most legislators would look to for their highest resources? It seems bad mechanics to convert *that* into a resistance, requiring vast expense of engineering to overcome it, which might obviously have been treated as a power of the first magnitude for overcoming other and inevitable resistance. Strong reasons must be brought for such an inversion of the ordinary procedure. What are they in Plato's system? Simply this: that from individual marriages and separate children, not only many feuds arise between man and man, family and family; a private interest is established as against other private interests; but also a private parental interest is established in another sense, namely, against the public; a parental or family interest, differing from the public state interest, and often enough in mortal hostility to that interest.

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a main of game cocks—an amusement so extensively patronized by Plato himself.

Be it so: a danger, a pressure, is exposed by Plato in one direction—confronted by what we Christians should think a far heavier in another; or, to express it more strictly, a gain is sought in one direction—which gain seems to us fatally compensated by loss in another. But *that* is part of Plato's theory—*that* he confronts with his eyes open—and so far it might seem false logic to oppose him, because it is one of the postulates in effect on which his system rests. But we have a right to demand consistency: and, when Plato brings the wives and children on the field of battle in order to sustain the general sentiment of patriotism, he is virtually depending upon that power which he had previously renounced; he is throwing the weight of his reliance upon a providential arrangement which he had tossed aside not as useless merely, but as vicious; he is clinging in his distress to those sanctities, conjugal and parental, of which he had said in his self-confidence—"Behold! I will give you something better." And tolerably sure we are, that, had Plato prosecuted the details of his theory into more of their circumstantialities, or had he been placed under the torture of a close polemic review, he would have been found reviving for its uses, and for its solution of many perplexities in practice, that very basis of female honour and modesty, which by his practice and by his professions he has so earnestly laboured to destroy.

The reader will arrive probably at a pretty fixed opinion as to the service for state purposes likely to arise from this exhibition of a clamorous nursery, children and nurses, upon the field of battle. As a flag, banner, or ensign, if Plato could in any way contrive that the army should regard the nursery militant as the sacred depository of their martial honour, then it is probable that men would fight desperately for *that* considered as a trophy, which they regarded but

lightly as a household memorial. But this would be unattainable. Even with us, and our profounder Christian feelings, the women attendant upon an army (who, in the Thirty Years' War, on the Catholic side often amounted to another army) have never been elevated into a "pignus sanctum militiæ." The privates and subaltern officers might readily have come into such a view; but the commander-in-chief with his staff would have set their faces against so dangerous a principle—it would have fettered the movements of an army too much; and in most cases would defeat any sudden manœuvres in the presence of an enemy. Mere justice to human powers demands that the point of honour for armies, or for sections of armies (such as regiments, &c.), should be placed in that which can move concurrently with the main body, no matter for roads, weather, want of provisions, or any other circumstances. Even artillery, therefore, though a subject of martial jealousy, is not made absolutely coincident with the point of martial honour. And another consideration is this—that not only no object ever can be raised into that mode of dignity when all members of the army are not parties to its consecration, but even the enemy must be a party to this act. Accordingly, the sanctity of the flag, as the national honour in a symbolic form confided to a particular officer, is an inheritance transmitted downwards through many generations of every nation in Christendom. Now, if Plato's republic were even able to translate the point of honour (which for the Greeks consisted in a ritual celebration of the battle by sacrifices, together with a choral chant, and also in the right to erect a frail memorial of the victory *)

* "*Frail,*" not from any indisposition to gasconade: but there was a dark superstition which frightened the Greeks from raising any durable monuments to a triumph over Greeks: judicial calamities

to the capture or preservation of the women and children, —still this change could not win a general ratification; for the neighbouring states would not be persuaded to terms of "reciprocity." What! not if they also were Platonic states? Ay, but that is impossible; for Plato himself lays the foundation of hope, and the prospects of conquest, for his own state, in the weakness (growing out of luxury, as also out of the conjugal and parental relations) presumable throughout the neighbouring states.

These ambulatory nurseries, therefore, never could be made to interest the honour even of a Platonic army, since no man would consent to embark his own honour upon a stake to which the enemy afforded no corresponding stake. Always to expose your own honour to loss with no reversionary gain under any contingency; always to suffer anxiety in your own person with no possibility of retaliating this anxiety upon the enemy—would have been too much for the temper of Socrates; and we fear that he would have left even Xantippe herself, with all her utensils of every kind, as a derelict for the benefit of the enemy in dry weather, when a deluge from upper windows might not have been unwelcome. But if no honour were pledged upon the nursery in the rear, the next step would ertainly be, that under difficult circumstances, stress of weather, short provisions, or active light cavalry in the rear, the nursery would become the capital nuisance of the army. Ambulatory hospitals, though so evidently a personal interest of the nearest kind, are trying to soldiers when overworked; but ambulatory nurseries, with no intelligible motive for their presence, continual detachments and extra guards on *their*

would descend upon the victors, *Nemesis* would be upon their haunches, if they exulted too loudly. Stone, therefore, marble, and brass, were forbidden materials for the *tropæa*! they were always made of wood. If not, look out for squalls ahead!

account, with an enemy laughing at the nursery uproars, would cause a mutiny even if Plato were there in person. Sentiment but ill accords with the gross realities of business, as Charles Lamb illustrated (rather beyond the truth in that case), with regard to Lord Camelford's corpse, when clearing the custom-house for interment under an aged tree in Switzerland; and to hawk along with an army a *menagerie* of spectators, against a day of battle, would be an arrangement so little applicable to any but select expeditions, that the general overturn of nursery waggons once a day, with constant fracture of skulls, would be the least tragical issue within reasonable expectation. Not being "sacred," as depositaries of honour, they would soon rank as curses. And speaking gravely, when we reflect on the frequency, even in Christian lands, with which, under the trials of extreme poverty, the parental tie gives way—what other result than open insubordination could be expected from a plan which was adapted to a mere melo-dramatic effect, at the price of comfort to the army throughout the whole campaign? Not being associated with patriotic honour, as we have endeavoured to show, and the parental tie being so aërial in any case where neither mother nor child belonged to the individual, but also so exceedingly questionable in the case of Plato's artifices for concealment having succeeded to the letter—what visionary statesmanship would it prove to build for so much as a day's service, or for an extra effort, upon the presence of those who could have little other value in the soldier's eye than that they were natives of the same city with himself!

Even this, however, is not the worst: pursuing to the last the regulations of Plato, the reader is more and more surprised by the unconscious inconsistency which emerges: for whilst recollecting the weight of service—the stress which Plato has thrown upon the parental affection in this

case—he finds still further proof of the excessive degradation to which Plato has reduced the rank of that affection as a moral principle; in short, he finds him loading it with responsibility as a duty, whilst he is destroying it as an honour, and polluting it as an enjoyment. Let us follow the regulations to their end:—The guardians of the state, as they are called in their civil relation, the soldiers, as they are called with respect to foreign states and to enemies in general, have been originally selected for their superior qualities of body. Thus the most natural (because the most obvious) grounds of personal vanity, are here at once consecrated by state preference and peculiar rank. In civilized states, these advantages being met and thwarted at every turning by so many higher modes of personal distinction—knowledge, special accomplishments applicable to special difficulties, intellect generally, experience large and comprehensive, or local and peculiar—riches, popular influence, high birth, splendid connexions; the consequence is, that mere physical advantages rank as the lowest class of pretensions, and practically are not of much avail, except as regards beauty when eminent in women, though even for that the sphere is narrow; since what woman, by mere beauty, ever drew after her such a train of admirers as a few of our modern female writers in verse? Consequently the arrogance in these soldiers of Plato, finding themselves at once acknowledged as the best models of physical excellence in the state; and also, in the second place, raised to the rank of an aristocracy on account of this excellence, would be unlimited. It would be crossed by no rival mode of excellence—since no other would be recognised and countenanced by the state.

With this view of their own vast superiority, naturally—and, in a state conformed to that mode of thinking, almost excusably—looking upon their own rank as a mere concession

of justice to their claims of birth, the soldiers would review their condition in other respects. They would then find that, under the Platonic laws, they enjoyed two advantages, viz., first, a harem, furnished with the select women of the state, having precisely the sort of personal pre-eminence corresponding to their own; a modern Mahometan polygamy, in fact, but without that appropriation which constitutes the luxury of Mahometan principles; secondly, a general precedency. On the other hand, to balance these privileges, and even with the most dissolute men greatly to outweigh them, they would find—

1. That they had, and could have, no property; not a fragment: even their arms would be the property of the state; even the dress of mail, in which the ὁπλιται or *men-at-arms* (heavy-armed cuirassiers, or cataphractoi), must be arrayed, would return to the ὁπλοθηκη, or *arsenal*, in time of peace: not a chattel, article of furniture, or personal ornament, but would have a public stamp, as it were, upon it, making it felony to sell, or give, or exchange it. It is true that, to reconcile the honourable men, the worshipful paupers to this austere system, Plato tells us—that the other order of citizens will not be rich: nobody, in fact, will be allowed to possess any great wealth. But there is still a difference between something and nothing. And then, as to this supposed *maximum* of riches which is to be adopted, no specific arrangements are shown, by which, in consistency with any freedom of action, further accumulation can be intercepted, or actual possession ascertained.

2. "But," says Plato, "what would the fellows want with property? Food, is it? Have they not *that* food at the public cost; and better for their health than any which they would choose? Drink—is there not the river? And if by ill luck it should happen to prove a χειμαρρους, or mountain torrent dependent upon floods and upon snows

melting in summer, is there not the rain at all times in cisterns and tanks, for those who prefer it? Shoemakers and weavers—(if it is shoes and tunics they want)—are they not working throughout the year for their benefit?" All this is true; but still they are aware that their own labours and hardships have a money value which would amply earn food and clothes: and that, on the general scale of remuneration for mercenary soldiership in Greece, adding their dangers to their daily work, they might obtain enough to purchase even such criminal superfluities as wine.

3. At present, again, this honoured class have many wives; none of their fellow-citizens more than one. But here, again, what a mockery of the truth! that one is really and exclusively the wife of him whom she has married; dedicates her love and attentions and her confidential secrecy to that man only; knows and retains her own children in her own keeping; and these children regard their own parents as their own sole benefactors. How gladly would the majority of the guardians, after two years' experience of the dissolute barrack, accept in exchange the quiet and hallowed privacy of the artisan's cottage!

4. The soldiers again, it is urged, enjoy something of that which sweetens a sailor's life, and keeps it from homely insipidity—viz., the prospect of adventure, and of foreign excursions: even danger, kept within just limits, is a mode of pleasurable stimulation. But under what restriction do the Platonic soldiery enjoy these prospects of peril and adventure? Never but on a service of peculiar hardship. For it is a badge of their slavery to public uses, that for them only there exists no liberty of foreign travel. All the rest, throughout the city, may visit foreign lands: the honourable class only is confined to the heartless tumult of its dissolute barracks.

Plato evidently felt these bitter limitations of free agency to be, at the same time, oppressive and degrading. Still he did not think himself at liberty to relax them. His theory he conceived to be a sort of watch-work, which would keep moving if all the parts were kept in their places, but would stop on any disturbance of their interactions. Not being able to give any relief, the next thing was—to give compensation. And accordingly, in addition to the sensual bait of polygamy already introduced as the basis of his plan, he now proceeds to give a still wider licence to appetite. It takes the shape of a dispensation in practice, from a previous special restriction in one particular direction: the whole body of guardians and their female associates, or "wives," are excluded from conjugal intercourse except within strict limits as to age; from the age of twenty to forty for the women, of thirty to fifty for the men, is the range within which they are supposed to be capable of producing a healthy race of children. Within those limits they are licensed: not further. But, by way of compensation, un limited concubinage is tolerated for the seniors; with this one dreadful proviso—that any children born from such connexions, as presumably not possessing the physical stamina, or other personal advantages looked for from more carefully selected parents, must be murdered. Born of fathers who possess no personal property, these children could have no patrimony; nor succeed to any place as a mechanic artisan, or labourer. Succeeding to a state father, they succeed to nothing; they are thrown as waifs or strays on the state bounty: and for that they are not eligible, as not having been born within the privilege of the state regulations. No party, therefore, known to the state being responsible for their maintenance, they must die. And because the ancients had a scruple (no scruple of

mercy or of relenting conscience, but of selfish superstition) as to taking life by violence from any creature not condemned under some law, the mode of death must be by exposure on the open hills; where either the night air, or the fangs of a wolf, oftentimes of the great dogs, still preserved in most parts of Greece (and traced back to the days of Homer as the public nuisances of travellers), usually put an end to the unoffending creature's life.

Now, with this sensual bounty on infanticide, and this regular machinery for calling into existence such ill-fated blossoms on the tree of life, and for immediately strewing them on the ground by the icy wind of death, cutting adrift the little boat to go down the Niagara of violent death, in the very next night after its launching on its unknown river of life—could Plato misconceive the result? could he wish to misconceive it, as regarded the pieties of parental love? To make human life cheaper and more valueless than that of the brutes—is that the way to cherish the sanctity of parental affection; upon which affection, however, elsewhere, Plato throws so heavy a burden of duty?

Plato would have been surprised, had he anticipated the discoveries of modern experience as to the effect of marriages so assorted in point of age as he has supposed. This one arrangement, by mere disproportion of the sexes, would have introduced strange disturbances into his system.* But for general purposes, it is more important to remark—that the very indulgences of Plato are sensual: from a system in itself sensual in the most cruel degree, Plato grants a dispensation only to effect a Otaheitian carnival of licentious

* See Sadler and others on the relations of *age* in the two parties to a marriage—as the effectual determining causes of *sex* in the children born from such marriage.

appetite, connected with a contempt of human life, which is excessive even for paganism ; since in *that* the exposure of children was allowed as a relief from supposed evils of nature ; or (as we now see in Oude, and heretofore in Cutch) was practised by way of relief from what were regarded as *social* evils, viz., the necessity, in the absence of infanticide, which arose for giving daughters in marriage to men that were their inferiors in birth ; whereas here, under the system of Plato, the evil is self-created by the cruel and merciless philosopher with the view of meeting and counteracting ruinous results which nobody had caused but himself.

SORTILEGE ON BEHALF OF A LITERARY INSTITUTION.

Suddenly, about the middle of February, I received a request for some contribution of my own proper writing to a meditated Album of a new Literary Institution, called the Athenæum, in a great western city. What was to be done? The 13th of the month had already dawned before the request reached me; "return of post" was the sharp limitation notified within which my communication must revolve; whilst the request itself was dated February 10th: so that already three "returns of post" had finished their brief career on earth. I am not one of those people who, in respect of bread, insist on the discretionary allowance (*pain à discrétion*) of Paris *restaurants;* but, in respect to time, I *do.* Positively, for all efforts of thought I must have time *à discrétion.* And thus it happened that there was no resource available but one; which was this:—In my study I have a bath, large enough to swim in, provided the swimmer, not being an ambitious man, is content with going ahead to the extent of three inches at the utmost. This bath, having been superseded (as regards its original purpose) by a better, has yielded a secondary service to me as a reservoir for my MSS. Filled to the brim it is by papers of all sorts and sizes. Every paper written

by me, *to* me, *for* me, *of* or *concerning* me, and, finally, *against* me, is to be found, after an impossible search, in this capacious repertory. Those papers, by the way, that come under the last (or hostile) subdivision, are chiefly composed by shoemakers and tailors—an affectionate class of men, who stick by one to the last like pitch-plasters. One admires this fidelity; but it shows itself too often in waspishness, and all the little nervous irritabilities of attachment too jealous. They are wretched if they do not continually hear what one is "about," what one is "up to," and which way one is going to travel. Me, because I am a political economist, they plague for my private opinions on the currency, especially on that part of it which consists in bills at two years after date; and they always want an answer by return of post.—Now, from this reservoir I resolved to draw some paper for the use of the Athenæum. It was my fixed determination that this Institution should receive full justice, so far as human precautions could secure it. Four dips into the bath I decreed that the Athenæum should have; whereas an individual man, however hyperbolically illustrious, could have had but one. On the other hand, the Athenæum must really content itself with what fortune might send, and not murmur at me as if I had been playing with loaded dice. To cut off all pretence for such allegations, I requested the presence of three young ladies, haters of everything unfair, as female lawyers, to watch the proceedings on behalf of the Athenæum, to see that the dipping went on correctly, and also to advise the court in case of any difficulties arising. At six, P.M., all was reported right for starting in my study. The bath had been brilliantly illuminated from above, so that no tricks *could* be played in that quarter; and the young man who was to execute the dips had finished dressing in a new potato-sack,

with holes cut through the bottom for his legs. Now, as the sack was tied with distressing tightness about his throat, leaving only a loop-hole for his right arm to play freely, it is clear that however sincerely fraudulent in his intentions, and in possible collusion with myself, he could not assist me by secreting any papers about his person, or by any other knavery that we might wish to perpetrate. The young ladies having taken their seats in stations admirably chosen for overlooking any irregular movements, the proceedings opened. The inaugural step was made in a neat speech from myself, complaining that I was the object of unjust suspicions, and endeavouring to re-establish my character for absolute purity of intentions; but, I regret to say, ineffectually. I declared with some warmth, that in the bath, but whereabouts I could not guess, there lay a particular paper which I valued as equal to the half of my possessions: "But for all that," I went on, "if our honourable friend in the potato sack should chance to haul up this very paper, I am resolved to stand by the event, yes, in that case, to the half of my kingdom I will express my interest in the Institution. Should even *that* prize be drawn, out of this house it shall pack off to the Athenæum this very night." Upon this, the leader of the attorneys, whom, out of honour to Shakspere,* I may as well call Portia, chilled my enthusiasm disagreeably by saying—"There was no occasion for any extra zeal on *my* part in such an event, since, as to packing out of this house to the Athenæum, she and her learned sisters would take good care that it *did;*"—in fact, *I* was to have no merit whatever I did. Upon this, by way of driving away the melancholy caused by the obstinate prejudices of the attorneys, I called for a glass of wine, and, turning to the west, I drank the

* *Merchant of Venice.*

health of the Athenæum, under the allegoric idea of a young lady about to come of age and enter upon the enjoyment of her estates. "Here's to your prosperity, my dear lass," I said; "you're very young; but that's a fault which, according to the old Greek adage, is mending every day; and I'm sure you'll always continue as amiable as you are now towards strangers in distress for books and journals. Never grow churlish, my dear, as some of your sex are" (saying which, I looked savagely at Portia). And then, I made the signal to the young man for getting to work—Portia's eyes, as I noticed privately, brightening like a hawk's. "*Prepare to dip!*" I called aloud; and soon after —"*Dip!*" At the "*prepare,*" Potato-sack went on his right knee (his face being at right angles to the bath); at the "Dip!" he plunged his right arm into the billowy ocean of papers. For one minute he worked amongst them as if he had been pulling an oar; and then, at the peremptory order "*Haul up!*" he raised aloft in air, like Brutus refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar, his booty. It was handed, of course, to the attorneys, who showed a little female curiosity at first, for it was a letter with the seal as yet unbroken, and might prove to be some old love-letter of my writing, recently sent back to me by the Dead-Letter Office. It still looked fresh and blooming. So, if there was no prize for the Athenæum, there might still be an interesting secret for the benefit of the attorneys. What it was, and what each successive haul netted, I will register under corresponding numbers.

No. 1.—This was a dinner invitation for the 15th of February, which I had neglected to open. It was, as bill-brokers say, "coming to maturity," but luckily not *past due* (in which case you have but a poor remedy), for it had still two days to run before it could be presented for payment. A

debate arose with the attorneys—Whether this might not do for the *Album*, in default of any better haul? I argued for the affirmative—that, although a dinner invitation cannot in reason be looked to for very showy writing, its motto being *Esse quam videri* (which is good Latin for—*To eat** *rather than make believe to eat*, as at Barmecide banquets), yet, put the case that I should send this invitation to the Athenæum, accompanied with a power-of-attorney to eat the dinner in my stead—might not *that* solid bonus as an enclosure weigh down the levity of the letter considered as a contribution to the *Album*, and take off the edge of the Athenæum's displeasure? Portia argued *contra*—that such a thing was impossible; because the Athenæum had 2000 mouths, and would, therefore, require 2000 dinners; —an argument which I admitted to be showy, but, legally speaking, hardly tenable: because the Athenæum had power to appoint a plenipotentiary—some man of immense calibre—to eat the dinner, as representative of the collective 2000. What there was to laugh at I don't see; but at this hot skirmish between me and Portia, Potato-sack began to laugh so immoderately, that I was obliged to pull him up by giving the word rather imperiously—"*Prepare to dip!*" Before he could obey, I was myself pulled up by Portia, with a triumph in her eye that alarmed me. She and her sister attorneys had been examining the dinner invitation—"And," said Portia maliciously to me, "it's quite correct;

* *Esse*, to eat.—The reader, who may chance to be no great scholar as regards Latin, will yet perhaps be aware of this meaning attached of old to the verb *Esse*, from a Latin enigma current amongst schoolboys, viz., *Pes est caput*, which at first sight seems to say that the *foot is the head:* but in the true version means—*Pes* [in its secondary sense, the same as *Pediculus*—an insect not to be named] *est*, eats—*caput*, the head.

as you observe there are two days good to the dinner hour on the 15th. Only, by misfortune, the letter is in the wrong year; it is four years old!" Oh! fancy the horror of this; since, besides the mortification from Portia's victory, I had perhaps narrowly escaped an indictment from the plenipotentiary for sending him what might *now* be considered a swindle. I hurried to cover my confusion, by issuing the two orders "*Prepare to dip!*" and "*Dip!*" almost in the same breath. No. 1, after all the waste of legal learning upon it, had suddenly burst like a soap-bubble; and the greater stress of expectation, therefore, had now settled on No. 2. With considerable trepidation of voice, I gave the final order—"*Haul up!*"

No. 2.—It is disagreeable to mention that this haul brought up "a dun." Disgust was written upon every countenance; and I fear that suspicion began to thicken upon myself, as having possibly (from my personal experience in these waters) indicated to our young friend where to dredge for duns with most chance of success. But I protest fervently my innocence. It is true that I had myself long remarked that part of the channel to be dangerously infested with duns. In searching for literary or philosophic papers, it would often happen for an hour together that I brought up little else than variegated specimens of the dun. And one vast bank there was, which I called the Goodwin Sands, because nothing within the memory of man was ever known to be hauled up from it except eternal varieties of the dun—some grey with antiquity, some of a neutral tint, some green and lively. With grief it was that I had seen our dipper shoaling his water towards that dangerous neighbourhood. But what could I do? If I had warned him off, Portia would have been sure to fancy that there was some great oyster-bed or pearl-fishery

in that region; and all I should have effected by my honesty would have been a general conviction of my treachery. Exactly below that very spot where he had dipped, lay, as stationary as if he had been anchored, a huge and ferocious dun of great antiquity. Age had not at all softened the atrocious expression of his countenance, but rather aided it by endowing him with a tawny hue. The size of this monster was enormous, nearly two square feet; and I fancied at times that, in spite of his extreme old age, he had not done growing. I knew him but too well; because whenever I happened to search in that region of the bath, let me be seeking what I would, and let me miss what I might, always I was sure to haul up *him* whom I never wanted to see again. Sometimes I even found him basking on the very summit of the papers; and I conceived an idea, which may be a mere fancy, that he came up for air in particular states of the atmosphere. At present he was *not* basking on the surface: better for the Athenæum if he *had:* for then the young man would have been cautious. Not being above, *he* was certainly below, and underneath the very centre of the dipper's plunge. Unable to control my feelings, I cried out—"Bear away to the right!" But Portia protested with energy against this intermeddling of mine, as perfidy too obvious. "Well," I said, "have it your own way: you'll see what will happen."

No. 3.—This, it is needless to say, turned out the horrid old shark, as I had long christened him: I knew his vast proportions, and his bilious aspect, the moment that the hauling-up commenced, which in *his* case occupied some time. Portia was the more angry, because she had thrown away her right to *express* any anger by neutralizing my judicious interference. She grew even more angry, because I, though sorry for the Athenæum, really could not help

laughing when I saw the truculent old wretch expanding his huge dimensions—all umbered by time and ill-temper—under the eyes of the wondering young ladies; so mighty was the contrast between this sallow behemoth and a rose-coloured little billet of their own. By the way, No. 2 had been a specimen of the dulcet dun, breathing only zephyrs of request and persuasion; but this No. 3 was a specimen of the polar opposite—the dun horrific and Gorgonian—blowing great guns of menace. As ideal specimens in their several classes, might they not have a value for the *museum* of the Athenæum, if it *has* one, or even for the *Album?* This was *my* suggestion, but overruled, like everything else that I proposed; and on the ground that a great city had too vast a conservatory of duns, native and indigenous, to need any exotic specimens. This settled, we hurried to the next dip, which, being by contract the last, made us all nervous.

No. 4.—This, alas! turned out a lecture addressed to myself by an ultra-moral friend; a lecture on procrastination; and not badly written. I feared that something of the sort was coming; for, at the moment of dipping, I called out to the dipper—"Starboard your helm! you're going smack upon the Goodwins: in thirty seconds you'll founder." Upon this, in an agony of fright, the dipper forged off, but evidently quite unaware that vast spurs stretched off from the Goodwins—shoals and sand-banks—where it was mere destruction to sail without a special knowledge of the soundings. He had run upon an ethical sand-bank. "Yet, after all, since this is to be the last dip," said Portia, "if the lecture is well written, might it not be acceptable to the Athenæum?" "Possibly," I replied; "but it is too personal. I could not allow myself to be advertised in a book as a procrastinator on principle, unless

the Athenæum would add a postscript under its official seal, expressing entire disbelief of the accusation, which I have private reasons for thinking that the Athenæum may decline to do."

"Well, then," said Portia, "as you wilfully rob the Athenæum of No. 4, which by contract is the undoubted property of that body, then you are bound to give us a fifth dip; particularly as you've been so treacherous all along." In the tone of an injured man I cried out, "My friend Potato-sack! will you quietly listen to this charge upon me? If it is a crime in me to know, and in you *not* to know, where the Goodwins lie, why, then, let you and me sheer off to the other side of the room, and let Portia try if *she* can do better. I allow her motion. I grant a fifth dip: and the more because it is an old saying—that there is luck in odd numbers: *numero deus impare gaudet;* only I must request of Portia to be the dipper on this final occasion." All the three attorneys blushed a rosy red on this unexpected summons. It was one thing to criticise, but quite another thing to undertake the performance: and the fair attorneys trembled for their professional reputation. Secretly, however, I whispered to Potato-sack, "You'll see now, such is female art and readiness, that, whatever sort of monster they haul up, they'll proclaim it a great prize, and contrive to extract some use from it that may place *us* in the wrong."

No. 5.—Thrilling, therefore, were the doubts, fears, expectations of us all, when Portia "prepared to dip," and secondly "dipped." She shifted her hand, and "ploitered" amongst the papers for full five minutes. I winked at this in consideration of past misfortunes; but, strictly speaking, she had no right to "ploiter" for more than one

minute. She contended that she knew, by intuition, the sort of paper upon which "duns" were written; and whatever else might come up, she was resolved it should not be a dun. "Don't be too sure," I said; and, at last, when she seemed to have settled her choice, I called out the usual word of command, "*Haul up!*"

"What is it?" we said; "what's the prize?" one and all rushing up to Portia. Oh Gemini! my sympathizing reader;—it was a sheet of blank paper!

Did we laugh, or did we cry? I, for my part, was afraid to do either. I really felt for Portia, and, at the same time, for the Athenæum. But, bless you, reader! there was no call for pity to Portia. With the utmost coolness she said, so ready were *her* wits for facing any issue, "Oh! this is *carte blanche* for receiving your latest thoughts. This is the paper on which you are to write an essay for the Athenæum; and thus we are providentially enabled to assure our client the Athenæum of something expressly manufactured for the occasion, and not an old wreck from the Goodwins. Fortune loves the Athenæum; and her four blanks at starting were only meant to tease that Institution, and to enhance the value of her final favour." "Ah, indeed!" I said in an under tone, "*meant to tease!* there are other ladies who understand that little science beside Fortune!" However, there is no disobeying the commands of Portia; so I sat down to write a paper on Astrology. But, before beginning, I looked at Potato-sack, whispering only, "You see; I told you what would happen."

ASTROLOGY.

As my contribution to their *Album*, I will beg the Athenæum to accept a single thought on this much-injured subject. Astrology I greatly respect; but it is singular that my respect for the science arose out of my contempt for its professors,—not exactly as a direct logical consequence, but as a casual suggestion from that contempt. I believe in Astrology, but not in astrologers; as to *them* I am an incorrigible infidel. First, let me state the occasion upon which my astrological thought arose, and then, secondly, the thought itself.

When about seventeen years old, I was wandering as a pedestrian tourist in North Wales. For some little time, the centre of my ramblings (upon which I still revolved from all my excursions, whether elliptical, circular, or zigzag) was Llangollen in Denbighshire, or else Rhuabon, not more than a few miles distant. One morning I was told by a young married woman, at whose cottage I had received some kind hospitalities, that an astrologer lived in the neighbourhood. "What might be his name?" Very good English it was that my young hostess had hitherto spoken; and yet, in this instance, she chose to answer me in Welsh. *Mochinahante* was her brief reply. I dare say that my spelling of the word will not stand Welsh criticism; but what can you expect from a man's first attempt at Welsh orthography? which at that time was, and (I believe) still is, a very rare accomplishment in the six counties of North Wales. But what did *Mochinahante* mean? For a man might as well be anonymous, or call himself X Y Z, as offer one his visiting card indorsed with a name so frightful to look at —so torturing to utter—so impossible to spell—as *Mochinahante*. And that it had a translatable meaning—that it

was not a proper name but an appellative, in fact some playful *sobriquet*, I felt certain, from observing the young woman to smile whilst she uttered it. My next question drew from her that this Pagan-looking monster of a name meant *Pig-in-the-dingle.* But really, now, between the original monster and this English interpretation, there was very little to choose ; in fact the interpretation, as often happens, strikes one as the harder to understand of the two. "To be sure it does," says a lady sitting at my elbow, and tormented by a passion so totally unfeminine as curiosity ; "to be sure—very much harder ; for *Mochina—what-do-you-call-it ?* might, you know, mean something or other, for anything that you or I could say to the contrary ; but as to *Pig-in-the-dingle*—what dreadful nonsense ! what an impossible description of an astrologer ! A man that—let me see—does something or other about the stars : how can *he* be described as a pig ? pig in *any* sense, you know ; pig in *any* place ? But *Pig-in-a-dingle ;* why, if he's a pig at all, he must be *Pig-on-a-steeple*, or *Pig-on-the-top-of-a-hill*, that he may rise above the mists and vapours. Now I insist, my dear creature, on your explaining all this riddle on the spot. *You* know it ; you came to the end of the mystery ; but none of *us* that are sitting here can guess at the meaning ; we shall all be ill, if you keep us waiting—I've a headache beginning already ; so say the thing at once, and put us out of torment."

What's to be done ? I *must* explain the thing to the Athenæum ; and if I stop to premise an oral explanation for the lady's separate use, there will be no time to save the village post, which waits for no man, and is deaf even to female outcries. By way of compromise, therefore, I request of the lady that she will follow my pen with her radiant eyes, by which means she will obtain the earliest

intelligence, and the speediest relief to her headache. I, on my part, will not loiter, but will make my answer as near to a telegraphic answer, in point of speed, as a rigid metallic pen will allow.—I divide this answer into two heads: the first concerning "*in the dingle;*" the second concerning "*pig.*" My philosophic researches, and a visit to the astrologer, ascertained a profound reason for describing him as *in-the-dingle;* viz., because he *was* in a dingle. He was the sole occupant of a little cove amongst the hills—the sole householder; and so absolutely such, that if ever any treason should be hatched in the dingle, clear it was to my mind that *Mochinahante* would be found at the bottom of it; if ever war should be levied in this dingle, *Mochinahante* must be the sole belligerent; and if a forced contribution were ever imposed upon this dingle, *Mochinahante* (poor man!) must pay it all out of his own pocket. The lady interrupts me at this point to say—"Well, I understand all *that;* that's all very clear. But what I want to know about is—*Pig.* Come to *Pig.* Why *Pig?* How *Pig?* In what sense *Pig?* You can't have any profound reason, you know, for *that.*"

Yes, I have: a *very* profound reason; and satisfactory to the most sceptical of philosophers, viz., that he *was* a Pig. I was presented by my fair hostess to the great interpreter of the stars, in person; for I was anxious to make the acquaintance of an astrologer, and especially of one who, whilst owning to so rare a profession owned also to the soft impeachment of so very significant a name. Having myself enjoyed so favourable an opportunity for investigating the reasonableness of that name, *Mochinahante,* as applied to the Denbighshire astrologer, I venture to pronounce it unimpeachable. About his dress there was a forlornness, and an ancient tarnish or *œrugo,* which went

far to justify the name ; and upon his face there sat that lugubrious rust (or what medallists technically call *patina*) which bears so costly a value when it is found on the *coined* face of a Syro-Macedonian prince long since compounded with dust, but, alas ! bears no value at all if found upon the flesh-and-blood face of a living philosopher. Speaking humanly, one would have insinuated that the star-gazer wanted much washing and scouring ; but, astrologically speaking, perhaps he would have been spoiled by earthly waters for his celestial vigils.

Mochinahante was civil enough ; a pig, if by accident dirty, is not therefore rude ; and, after seating me in his chair of state, he prepared for his learned labours by cross-examinations as to the day and hour of my birth. The *day* I knew to a certainty ; and even about the *hour* I could tell quite as much as ought in reason to be expected from one who certainly had not been studying a chronometer when that event occurred. These points settled, the astrologer withdrew into an adjoining room, for the purpose (as he assured me) of scientifically constructing my horoscope ; but unless the drawing of corks is a part of that process, I should myself incline to think that the great man, instead of minding my interests amongst the stars and investigating my horoscope, had been seeking consolation for himself in bottled porter. Within half-an-hour he returned ; looking more lugubrious than ever—more grim—more grimy (if *grime* yields any such adjective)—a little more rusty—rather more *patinous*, if numismatists will lend me that word—and a great deal more in want of scouring. He had a paper of diagrams in his hand, which was supposed to contain some short-hand memoranda upon my horoscope ; but, from its smokiness, a malicious visitor might have argued a possibility that it had served for more customers than myself. Under his arm he

carried a folio book, which (he said) was a manuscript of unspeakable antiquity. This he was jealous of my seeing; and before he would open it, as if I and the book had been two prisoners at the bar suspected of meditating some collusive mischief (such as tying a cracker to the judge's wig), he separated us as widely from each other as the dimensions of the room allowed. These solemnities finished, we were all ready—I, and the folio volume, and Pig-in-the-dingle—for our several parts in the play. *Mochinahante* began:—He opened the pleadings in a deprecatory tone, protesting, almost with tears, that if anything should turn out amiss in the forthcoming revelations, it was much against his will—that *he* was powerless, and could not justly be held responsible for any part of the disagreeable message which it might be his unhappiness to deliver. I hastened to assure him that I was incapable of such injustice; that I should hold the stars responsible for the whole; by nature, that I was very forgiving; that any little malice, which I might harbour for a year or so, should all be reserved for the use of the particular constellations concerned in the plot against myself; and, lastly, that I was now quite ready to stand the worst of their thunders. Pig was pleased with this reasonableness—he saw that he had to deal with a philosopher—and, in a more cheerful tone, he now explained that my "case" was mystically contained in the diagrams; these smoke-dried documents submitted, as it were, a series of questions to the book; which book it was—a book of unspeakable antiquity—that gave the inflexible answers, like the gloomy oracle that it was. But I was not to be angry with the book, any more than with himself, since—

"Of course not," I replied, interrupting him; "the book did but utter the sounds which were predetermined by the white and black keys struck in the smoky diagrams; and

I could no more be angry with the book for speaking what it conscientiously believed to be the truth than with a decanter of port wine, or a bottle of porter, for declining to yield more than one or two wine-glasses of the precious liquor at the moment when I was looking for a dozen, under a transient forgetfulness, incident to the greatest minds, that I myself, ten minutes before, had nearly drunk up the whole." This comparison, though to a critic wide awake it might have seemed slightly personal, met with the entire approbation of *Pig-in-the-dingle.* A better frame of mind for receiving disastrous news, he evidently conceived, could not exist or be fancied by the mind of man than existed at that moment in myself. *He* was in a state of intense pathos from the bottled porter. *I* was in a state of intense excitement (pathos combined with horror) at the prospect of a dreadful lecture on my future life, now ready to be thundered into my ears from that huge folio of unspeakable antiquity, prompted by those wretched smoke-dried diagrams. I believe we were in magnetical rapport. Think of *that*, reader! Pig and I in magnetical rapport! Both making passes at each other! What in the world would have become of us if suddenly we should have taken to somnambulizing? Pig would have abandoned his dingle to me; and I should have dismissed Pig to that life of wandering which must have betrayed the unscoured and patinous condition of the astrologer to the astonished eyes of Cambria:—

> "Stout Glo'ster stood aghast [or *might* have stood] in speechless trance.
> *To arms!* cried Mortimer [or at least *might* have cried], and couch'd his quivering lance."

But Pig was a greater man than he seemed. He yielded neither to magnetism nor to bottled porter; but commenced

reading from the black book in the most awful tone of voice, and, generally speaking, most correctly. Certainly he made one dreadful mistake; he started from the very middle of a sentence, instead of the beginning; but then *that* had a truly lyrical effect, and also it was excused by the bottled porter. The words of the prophetic denunciation, from which he started, were these—"also *he* [that was myself, you understand] shall have red hair." "*There* goes a bounce," I said in an under tone; "the stars, it seems, can tell falsehoods as well as other people." "Also," for Pig went on without stopping, "he shall have seven-and-twenty children." Too horror-struck I was by this news to utter one word of protest against it. "Also," Pig yelled out at the top of his voice, "he shall desert them." Anger restored my voice, and I cried out, "That's not only a lie in the stars, but a libel; and, if an action lay against a constellation, I should recover damages." Vain it would be to trouble the reader with all the monstrous prophecies that Pig read against me. He read with a steady Pythian fury. Dreadful was his voice: dreadful were the starry charges against myself—things that I *was* to do—things that I must do: dreadful was the wrath with which secretly I denounced all participation in the acts which these wicked stars laid to my charge. But this infirmity of good-nature besets me, that, if a man shows trust and absolute faith in any agent or agency whatever, heart there is not in me to resist him, or to expose his folly. Pig trusted—O how profoundly!—in his black book of unspeakable antiquity. It would have killed him on the spot to prove that the black book was a hoax, and that he himself was another. Consequently, I submitted in silence to pass for the monster that Pig, under the coercion of the stars, had pronounced me, rather than part in anger from

the solitary man, who, after all, was not to blame, acting only in a ministerial capacity, and reading only what the stars obliged him to read. I rose without saying one word, advanced to the table, and paid my fees; for it is a disagreeable fact to record, that astrologers grant no credit, nor even discount upon prompt payment. I shook hands with *Mochinahante;* we exchanged kind farewells—he smiling benignly upon me, in total forgetfulness that he had just dismissed me to a life of storms and crimes; I, in return, as the very best benediction that I could think of, saying secretly, "O Pig, may the heavens rain their choicest soap-suds upon thee!"

Emerging into the open air, I told my fair hostess of the red hair which the purblind astrologer had obtained for me from the stars, and which, with *their* permission, I would make over to *Mochinahante* for a reversionary wig in his days of approaching baldness. But I said not one word upon that too bountiful allowance of children with which *Moch.* had endowed me. I retreated by nervous anticipation from that inextinguishable laughter which, I was too certain, would follow upon *her* part; and yet, when we reached the outlet of the dingle, and turned round to take a parting look of the astrological dwelling, I myself was overtaken by fits of laughter; for suddenly I figured in vision my own future return to this mountain recess, with the young legion of twenty-seven children. "*I* desert them, the darlings!" I exclaimed, "far from it! Backed by this filial army, I shall feel myself equal to the task of taking vengeance on the stars for the affronts they have put upon me through Pig, their servant. It will be like the return of the Heracleidæ to the Peloponnesus. The sacred legion will storm the "dingle," whilst *I* storm Pig; the rising generation will take military possession of "*-inahante,*"

whilst I deal with "*Moch*" (which I presume to be the part in the long word belonging to *Pig*)." My hostess laughed in sympathy with *my* laughter; but I was cautious of letting her have a look into my vision of the sacred legion. For the female mind is naturally but too prone to laughter. We quitted the dingle for ever; and so ended my first visit, being also my last, to an astrologer.

This, reader, was the true general occasion of my one thought upon astrology; and, before I mention that thought, I may add that the immediate impulse drawing my mind in any such direction was this: on walking to the table where the astrologer sat, in order to pay my fees, naturally I came nearer to the folio book than astrological prudence would generally have allowed. But Pig's attention was diverted for the moment to the silver coins laid before him—these he reviewed with the care reasonable in one so poor, and in a state of the coinage so neglected as in 1802 it was. By that moment of avarice in Pig, I profited so far as to look over the astrologer's person, sitting and bending forward full upon the book. This was spread open; and at a glance I saw that it was no MS., but a printed book, in black-letter types. The month of August stood as a rubric at the head of the broad margin—and below it stood some days of that month in orderly succession. "So then, Pig," said I in my thoughts, "it seems that any person whatever, born on my particular day and hour of August, is to have the same exact fate as myself. But a king and a beggar may chance thus far to agree. And be you assured, Pig, that all the infinite variety of cases lying between these two *termini* differ from each other in fortunes and incidents of life as much, though not so notoriously, as king and beggar."

Hence arose a confirmation of my contempt for astrology.

It seemed as if *necessarily* false—false by an *à priori* principle, viz., that the possible differences in human fortunes, which are infinite, cannot be measured by the possible differences in the particular moments of birth, which are too strikingly finite. It strengthened me in this way of thinking, that subsequently I found the very same objection in Macrobius. Macrobius may have stolen the idea; but certainly not from me—*as* certainly I did not steal it from him; so that here is a concurrence of two people independently, *one* of them a great philosopher, in the very same annihilating objection.

Now comes my one thought. Both of us were wrong, Macrobius and myself. Even the great philosopher is obliged to confess it. The objection truly valued is—to astrologers, not to astrology. No two events ever *did* coincide in point of time. Every event has, and must have, a certain duration; this you may call its *breadth;* and the true *locus* of the event in time is the central point of that breadth, which never was or will be the same for any two separate events, though grossly held to be contemporaneous. It is the mere imperfection of our human means for chasing the infinite subdivisibilities of time which causes us to regard two events as even by possibility concurring in their central moments. This imperfection is crushing to the pretensions of astrologers; but astrology laughs at it in the heavens; and astrology, armed with celestial chronometers, is true!

Suffer me to illustrate the case a little:—It is rare that a metaphysical difficulty can be made as clear as a pikestaff. This can. Suppose two events to occur in the same quarter of a minute—that is, in the same fifteen seconds; then, if they started precisely together, and ended precisely together, they would not only have the same breadth, but

this breadth would accurately coincide in all its parts or fluxions; consequently, the central moment, viz., the eighth, would coincide rigorously with the centre of each event. But suppose that one of the two events, A, for instance, commenced a single second before B, the other, then, because we are still supposing them to have the same breadth or extension, A will have ended in the second before B ends; and, consequently, the centres will be different, for the eighth second of A will be the seventh of B. The disks of the two events will overlap—A will overlap B at the beginning; B will overlap A at the end. Now, go on to assume that, in a particular case, this overlapping does not take place, but that the two events *eclipse* each other, lying as truly surface to surface as two sovereigns in a tight *rouleau* of sovereigns, or one dessert-spoon nestling in the bosom of another; in that case, the eighth or central second will be the centre for both. But even here a question will arise as to the degree of rigour in the coincidence; for divide the eighth second into a thousand parts or sub-moments, and perhaps the centre of A will be found to hit the 450th sub-moment, whilst that of B may hit the 600th. Or suppose, again, even this trial surmounted: the two harmonious creatures, A and B, running neck and neck together, have both hit simultaneously the true centre of the thousand sub-moments which lies half-way between the 500th and the 501st. All is right so far—"all right behind;" but go on, if you please; subdivide this last centre, which we will call X, into a thousand lesser fractions. Take, in fact, a railway express-train of decimal fractions, and give chase to A and B; my word for it that you will come up with them in some stage or other of the journey, and arrest them in the very act of separating their centres—which is a dreadful crime in the eye of astrology; for it is utterly impossible

that the initial moment, or *sub*-moment, or *sub-sub*-moment of A and B should absolutely coincide. Such a thing as a perfect start was never heard of at Doncaster. Now, this severe accuracy is not wanted on earth. Archimedes, it is well known, never saw a perfect circle, nor even, with his leave, a decent circle; for, doubtless, the reader knows the following fact, viz., that if you take the most perfect Vandyking ever cut out of paper or silk, by the most delicate of female fingers, with the most exquisite of Salisbury scissors, upon viewing it through a microscope, you will find the edges frightfully ragged; but if you apply the same microscope to a case of God's Vandyking on the corolla of a flower, you will find it as truly cut and as smooth as a moonbeam. We on earth, I repeat, need no such rigorous truth. For instance, you and I, my reader, want little perhaps with circles, except now and then to bore one with an augre in a ship's bottom, when we wish to sink her, and to cheat the underwriters; or, by way of variety, to cut one with a centre-bit through shop-shutters, in order to rob a jeweller;—so *we* don't care much whether the circumference is ragged or not. But that won't do for a constellation! The stars *n'entendent pas la raillerie* on the subject of geometry. The pendulum of the starry heavens oscillates truly; and if the Greenwich time of the *Empyreum* can't be repeated upon earth, without an error, a horoscope is as much a chimera as the perpetual motion, or as an agreeable income-tax. In fact, in casting a nativity, to swerve from the true centre by the trillionth of a centillionth is as fatal as to leave room for a coach and six to turn between your pistol shot and the bull's eye. If you haven't done the trick, no matter how near you've come to it. And to overlook this, is as absurd as was the answer of that Lieutenant M., who, being asked whether he had any connexion with

another officer of the same name, replied—"O yes! a very close one." "But in what way?" "Why, you see, I'm in the 50th regiment of foot, and he's in the 49th:" walking, in fact, just behind him? Yet, for all this, horoscopes may be calculated very truly by the stars amongst themselves; and my conviction is—that they are. They are perhaps even printed hieroglyphically, and published as regularly as a nautical almanac; only, they cannot be republished upon earth by any mode of piracy yet discovered amongst sublunary booksellers. Astrology, in fact, is a very profound, or, at least, a very lofty science; but astrologers are humbugs.

I have finished, and I am vain of my work; for I have accomplished three considerable things:—I have floored Macrobius; I have cured a lady of her headache; and lastly, which is best of all, I have expressed my sincere interest in the prosperity of a new-born Athenæum.

But our village post (a boy, in fact, who rides a pony) is mounting; and the chances are that this letter of mine will be too late:—a fact which, amongst all the dangers besetting me in this life, the wretched Pig forgot to warn me of.

Feb. 24, 1848.

NOTES ON WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.*

Nobody in this generation reads *The Spectator*. There are, however, several people still surviving who have read No. 1; in which No. 1 a strange mistake is made. It is there asserted, as a general affection of human nature, that it is impossible to read a book with satisfaction, until one has ascertained whether the author of it be tall or short, corpulent or thin, and, as to complexion, whether he be a "black" man (which, in the *Spectator's* time, was the absurd expression for a swarthy man) or a fair man, or a sallow man, or perhaps a green man, which Southey affirmed † to be the proper description of many stout artificers in Birmingham, too much given to work in metallic fumes; on which account the name of Southey is an abomination to this day in certain furnaces of Warwickshire. But can anything be more untrue than this Spectatorial doctrine? Did ever the youngest of female novel-readers, on a sultry day, decline to eat a bunch of grapes until she knew whether the fruiterer were a good-looking man? Which of us ever heard a stranger inquiring for a "Guide

* The Works of Walter Savage Landor. 2 vols.

† "*Southey affirmed:*"—viz., in the "Letters of Espriella," an imaginary Spaniard on a visit to England, about the year 1810.

to the Trosachs," but saying, "I scruple, however, to pay for this book, until I know whether the author is heather-legged." On this principle, if any such principle prevailed, we authors should be liable to as strict a revision of our physics before having any right to be read, as we all are from the medical advisers of insurance offices before having our lives insured; fellows that examine one with stethoscopes; that pinch one, that actually punch one in the ribs, until a man becomes savage, and—in case the insurance should miss fire in consequence of the medical report—speculates on the propriety of prosecuting the medical ruffian for an assault, for a most unprovoked assault and battery, and, if possible, including in the indictment the now odious insurance office as an accomplice before the fact. Meantime the odd thing is, not that Addison should have made a mistake, but that he and his readers should not, in this mistake, have recognised a hidden truth—the sudden illumination of a propensity latent in all people, but now first exposed; for it happens that there really *is* a propensity in all of us, very like what Addison describes, very different, and yet, after one correction, the very same. No reader cares about an author's person *before* reading his book: it is *after* reading it, and supposing the book to reveal something of the writer's *moral* nature, as modifying his intellect; it is for his fun, his fancy, his sadness, possibly his craziness, that any reader cares about seeing the author in person. Afflicted with the very satyriasis of curiosity, no man ever wished to see the author of a *Ready Reckoner*, or of a treatise on the *Agistment Tithe*, or on the *Present deplorable Dry-rot in Potatoes*. "Bundle off, sir, as fast as you can," the most diligent reader would say to such an author, in case he insisted on submitting his charms to inspection. "I have had quite enough distress

of mind from reading your works, without heeding the additional dry-rot of your bodily presence." Neither does any man, on descending from a railway train, turn to look whether the carriage in which he has ridden happens to be a good-looking carriage, or wish for an introduction to the coach-maker. Satisfied that the one has not broken his bones, and that the other has no writ against his person, he dismisses with the same frigid scowl both the carriage and the author of its existence.

But, with respect to Mr. Landor, as at all connected with this reformed doctrine of the *Spectator*, a difficulty arises. He is a man of great genius, and, as such, he *ought* to interest the public. More than enough appears of his strong, eccentric nature, through every page of his now extensive writings, to win, amongst those who have read him, a corresponding interest in all that concerns him personally; in his social relations, in his biography, in his manners, in his appearance. Out of two conditions for attracting a *personal* interest, he has powerfully realized one. His moral nature, shining with coloured light through the crystal shrine of his thoughts, will not allow of your forgetting it. A sunset of Claude, or a dying dolphin *can* be forgotten, and generally *is* forgotten; but not the fiery radiations of a human spirit, built by nature to animate a leader in storms, a martyr, a national reformer, an arch-rebel, as circumstances might dictate, but whom too much wealth,*

* "*Too much wealth*:"—Mr. Landor, who *should* know best, speaks of himself (once at least) as "poor;" but *that* is all nonsense. I have known several people with annual incomes bordering on £20,000, who spoke of themselves, and seemed seriously to think themselves, unhappy "paupers." Lady Hester Stanhope, with £2700 a year (of which about twelve arose from her Government pension), and without one solitary dependant in her train, thought herself rich enough to become a queen (an Arabic *malcky*) in the

and the accidents of education, have turned aside into a contemplative recluse. Had Mr. Landor, therefore, been read in any extent answering to his merits, he must have become, for the English public, an object of prodigious personal interest. We should have had novels upon him, lampoons upon him, libels upon him; he would have been shown up dramatically on the stage; he would, according to the old joke, have been "traduced" (*traduit*) in French, and also "overset" (*oversat*) in Dutch. Meantime he has *not* been read. It would be an affectation to think it. Many a writer is, by the sycophancy of literature, reputed to be read, whom in all Europe not six eyes settle upon through the revolving year. Literature, with its cowardly falsehoods, exhibits the largest field of conscious Phrygian adulation that human life has ever exposed to the derision of the heavens. Demosthenes, for instance, or Plato, is not read to the extent of twenty pages annually by ten people in Europe. The *sale* of their works would not account for three readers; the other six or seven are generally conceded as possibilities furnished by the great public libraries. But, then, Walter Savage Landor, though writing a little in Latin, and a *very* little in Italian, does not write at all in Greek. So far he has some advantage over Plato; and, if he writes chiefly in dialogue, which few people love to read any more than novels in the shape of letters, *that* is a crime common to both. So that he has the d——l's luck and his own; all Plato's chances, and one of his own beside, viz., his English. Still, it is no use counting chances; facts are the thing. And printing-presses, whether of Europe or of England, bear witness that neither Plato nor

Syrian mountains, but an absolute pauper for London: "for how, you know" (as she would say, pathetically), "could the humblest of spinsters live decently upon that pittance?"

Landor is a marketable commodity. In fact, these two men resemble each other in more particulars than it is at present necessary to say. Especially they were both inclined to be voluptuous ; both had a hankering after purple and fine linen ; both hated "filthy dowlas" with the hatred of Falstaff, whether in apparelling themselves or their diction ; and both bestowed pains as elaborate upon the secret *art* of a dialogue, as a lapidary would upon the cutting of a Sultan's rubies.

But might not a man build a reputation on the basis of *not* being read? To be read is undoubtedly something : to be read by an odd million or so, is a sort of feather in a man's cap ; but it is also a distinction, though of a separate kind, that he has been read absolutely by nobody at all. There have been cases, and one or two in modern times, where an author could point to a vast array of his own works, concerning which no evidence existed that so much as one had been opened by human hand, or glanced at by human eye. That was awful : such a sleep of pages by thousands in one eternal darkness, never to be visited by light ; such a rare immunity from the villanies of misconstruction ; such a Sabbath from the impertinencies of critics ! You shuddered to reflect that, for anything known to the contrary, *there* might lurk jewels of truth explored in vain, or treasure for ever intercepted to the interests of man. But such a sublimity supposes *total* defect of readers ; whereas it can be proved against Mr. Landor, that he has been read by at least a score of people, all wide awake ; and if any treason is buried in a page of his, thank Heaven, by this time it must have been found out and reported to the authorities. So that neither can Landor plead the unlimited popularity of a novelist, aided by the interest of a tale, and by an artist, nor the total obscuration of a Ger-

man metaphysician. Neither do mobs read him, as they do M. Sue; nor do all men turn away their eyes from him, as they do from Hegel.*

This, however, is true only of Mr. Landor's prose works. His first work was a poem, viz., *Gebir;* and it had the sublime distinction, for some time, of having enjoyed only two readers; which two were Southey and myself. It was on first entering at Oxford that I found "Gebir" printed and *published*, *i.e.*, nominally made *public;* whereas all its advertisements of birth and continued existence, were but so many notifications of its intense privacy. Not knowing Southey at that time, I vainly conceited myself to be the one sole purchaser and reader of this poem. I even fancied myself to have been pointed out in the streets of Oxford, where the two Landors had been well known in times preceding my own, as the one inexplicable man authentically known to possess "Gebir," or even (it might be whispered mysteriously) to have read "Gebir." It was not clear but this reputation might stand in lieu of any independent fame, and might raise me to literary distinction. The preceding generation had greatly esteemed the man called "*Single-Speech Hamilton;*" not at all for the speech (which, though good, very few people had read), but entirely for the supposed fact that he had exhausted himself in that one speech, and had become physically incapable of making a second: so that afterwards, when he really *did* make a second, everybody was incredulous; until, the thing being past denial, naturally the world was disgusted, and most people dropped his acquaintance. To be a Mono-Gebirist was quite as good a

* "*From Hegel:*"—I am not prepared with an affidavit that no man ever read the late Mr. Hegel, that great master of the impenetrable. But sufficient evidence of that fact, as I conceive, may be drawn from those who have written commentaries upon him.

title to notoriety; and five years after, when I found that I had "a brother near the throne," viz., Southey, mortification would have led me willingly to resign altogether in *his* favour. Shall I make the reader acquainted with the story of Gebir?

Gebir is the king of Gibraltar; which, however, it would be an anachronism to *call* Gibraltar, since it drew that name from this very Gebir; and doubtless, by way of honour to his memory. Mussulmans tell a different story; but who cares for what is said by infidel dogs? King, then, let us call him of Calpe; and a very good king he is; young, brave, of upright intentions; but being also warlike, and inflamed by popular remembrances of ancient wrongs, he resolves to seek reparation from the children's children of the wrong-doers; and he weighs anchor in search of Mr. Pitt's "indemnity for the past," though not much regarding that right honourable gentleman's "security for the future." Egypt was the land that sheltered the wretches that represented the ancestors that had done the wrong. To Egypt, therefore, does king Gebir steer his expedition, which counted ten thousand picked men:—

"Incenst
By meditating on primeval wrongs,
He blew his battle-horn; at which uprose
Whole nations · here ten thousand of most might
He called aloud; and soon Charoba saw
His dark helm hover o'er the land of Nile."

Who is Charoba? As respects the reader, she is the heroine of the poem: as respects Egypt, she is queen by the grace of God, defender of the faith, and so forth. Young and accustomed to unlimited obedience, how could she be otherwise than alarmed by the descent of a host far more martial than her own effeminate people, and assuming a religious

character—avengers of wrong in some forgotten age? In her trepidation, she turns for aid and counsel to her nurse Dalica. Dalica, by the way, considered as a word, is a dactyle; that is, you must not lay the accent on the *i*, but on the first syllable. But, considered as a woman, Dalica is about as bad a one as even Egypt could furnish. She is a thorough gipsy; a fortune-teller, and something worse. In fact, she is a sorceress, "stiff in opinion:" and it needs not Pope's authority to infer that—of course she "is always in the wrong." By her advice, but for a purpose best known to herself, an interview is arranged between Charoba and the invading monarch. At this interview, the two youthful sovereigns, Charoba the queen of hearts, and Gebir the king of clubs, fall irrevocably in love with each other. There's an end of club law: and Gebir is ever afterwards disarmed. But Dalica, that wicked Dalica, that sad old dactyle, who sees everything clearly that happens to be twenty years distant, cannot see a pike-staff if it happens to be close before her nose, and of course she mistakes Charoba's agitations of love for paroxysms of anger. Charoba is herself partly to blame for this; but you must excuse her. The poor child readily confided her *terrors* to Dalica; but how can she be expected to make a *love* confidante of a tawny old witch like her? Upon this mistake, however, proceeds the whole remaining plot. *Dr*. Dalica (which means *doctor* D., and by no means *dear* D.) having totally mistaken the symptoms, the diagnosis, the prognosis, and everything that ends in *osis*, necessarily mistakes also the treatment of the case; and, like some other doctors, failing to make a cure, covers up her blunders by a general slaughter. She visits her sister, a sorceress more potent than herself, living

"Deep in the wilderness of woe, Masar."

Between them they concert hellish incantations. From these issues a venomous robe, like that of the centaur Nessus. This, at a festal meeting between the two nations and their two princes, is given by Charoba to her lover—her lover, but as yet not recognised as such by *her*, nor until the moment of his death, avowed as such by himself. Gebir dies—the accursed robe, dipped in the "viscous poison" exuding from the gums of the grey cerastes, and tempered by other venomous juices of plant and animal, proves too much for his rocky constitution—Gibraltar is found not impregnable—the blunders of Dalica, the wicked nurse, and the arts of her sister Myrthyr, the wicked witch, are found too potent; and in one moment the union of two nations, with the happiness of two sovereigns, is wrecked for ever. The closing situation of the parties—monarch and monarch, nation and nation, youthful king and youthful queen, dying or despairing—nation and nation that had been reconciled, starting asunder once again amidst festival and flowers—these objects are scenically effective. The conception of the grouping is good; the *mise en scène* is good; but, from want of pains-taking, not sufficiently brought out into strong relief; and the dying words of Gebir, which wind up the whole, are too bookish—they seem to be part of some article which Gebir had been writing for the Gibraltar Quarterly.

There are two episodes, composing jointly about two-sevenths of the poem, and by no means its weakest parts. One describes the descent of Gebir to Hades. His guide is a man—who *is* this man?

"Living—they called him Aroar."

Is he *not* living, then? No. Is he dead, then? No, nor dead either. Poor Aroar cannot live, and cannot die—so that he is in an almighty fix. In this disagreeable dilemma, he contrives to amuse himself with politics—and, rather of

a Jacobinical cast: like the Virgilian Æneas, Gebir is introduced not to the shades of the past only, but of the future. He sees the pre-existing ghosts of gentlemen who are yet to come, silent as ghosts ought to be, but destined at some far distant time to make a considerable noise in our upper world. Amongst these is our worthy old George III., who (strange to say!) is not foreseen as galloping from Windsor to Kew, surrounded by an escort of dragoons, nor in a scarlet coat riding after a fox, nor taking his morning rounds amongst his sheep and his turnips; but in the likeness of some savage creature, whom really, were it not for his eyebrows and his "*slanting*" forehead, the reader would never recognise:

> "Aroar! what wretch that nearest us? what wretch
> Is that, with eyebrows white and slanting brow?
> ——O kin
> Iberia bore him; but the breed accurst
> Inclement winds blew blighting from north-east"

Iberia is spiritual England; and *north-east* is mystical Hanover. But what, then, were the "wretch's" crimes? The white eyebrows I confess to; those were certainly crimes of considerable magnitude: but what else? Gebir has the same curiosity as myself, and propounds something like the same fishing question:

> "He was a warrior then, nor fear'd the gods?"

To which Aroar answers—

> "Gebir! he fear'd the demons, not the gods;
> Though them, indeed, his daily face adored,
> And was no warrior; yet the thousand lives
> Squander'd as if to exercise a sling," &c &c.

Really Aroar is too *Tom-Painish*, and seems up to a little treason. He makes the poor king answerable for more than his own share of national offences, if such they were. All of us in the last generation were rather fond of fighting

and assisting at fights in the character of mere spectators. I am sure *I* was. But if *that* is any fault, so was Plato, who, though probably inferior as a philosopher to you and me, reader, was much superior to either of us as a cock-fighter. So was Socrates in the preceding age; for, as he notoriously haunted the company of Alcibiades at all hours, he must often have found his pupil diverting himself with these fighting quails which he kept in such numbers. Be assured that the oracle's "wisest of men" lent a hand very cheerfully to putting on the spurs when a main was to be fought; and, as to betting, probably *that* was the reason why Xantippe was so often down upon him when he went home at night. To come home reeling from a fight, without a drachma left in his pocket, would naturally provoke any woman. Posterity has been very much misinformed about these things; and, no doubt, about Xantippe, poor woman, in particular. If *she* had had a disciple to write books, as her cock-fighting husband had, perhaps we should have read a very different story. By the way, the propensity to *scandalum magnatum* in Aroar was one of the things that fixed my youthful attention, and perhaps my admiration, upon Gebir. For myself, as perhaps the reader may have heard, I was and am a Tory; and in some remote geological era, my bones may be dug up by some future Buckland as a specimen of the fossil Tory. Yet, for all that, I loved audacity; and I gazed with some indefinite shade of approbation upon a poet whom the Attorney-General might have occasion to speak with.

This, however, was a mere condiment to the main attraction of the poem. *That* lay in the picturesqueness of the images, attitudes, groups, dispersed everywhere. The eye of the reader rested everywhere upon festal processions, upon the storied panels of Theban gates, or upon sculptured

vases. The very first lines that by accident met my eye, were those which follow. I cite them in mere obedience to the fact as it really was; else there are more striking illustrations of this sculpturesque faculty in Mr. Landor; and for this faculty it was that both Southey and myself separately and independently had named him the English Valerius Flaccus.

GEBIR ON REPAIRING TO HIS FIRST INTERVIEW WITH CHAROBA.

"But Gebir, when he heard of her approach,
Laid by his orbéd shield. his vizor helm,
His buckler and his corslet he laid by,
And bade that none attend him: at his side
Two faithful dogs that urge the silent course,
Shaggy, deep-chested, croucht; the crocodile,
Crying, oft made them raise their flaccid ears,
And push their heads within their master's hand.
There was a lightning paleness in his face,
Such as Diana rising o'er the rocks
Shower'd on the lonely Latmian; on his brow
Sorrow there was, but there was nought severe."

"And the long moonbeam on the hard wet sand
Lay like a jasper column half up-rear'd."

"The king, who sat before his tent, descried
The dust rise redden'd from the setting sun"

Now let us pass to the imaginary dialogues :—

Marshal Bugeaud and Arab Chieftain.—This dialogue, which is amongst the shortest, would not challenge a separate notice, were it not for the freshness in the public mind,* and yet uncicatrized rawness of that atrocity which

* Ten or a dozen years ago, when this was written, the atrocity of *Dahra* was familiar to the readers of newspapers: it is now forgotten; and therefore I retrace it briefly. The French in Algiers, upon occasion of some *razzia* against a party of Arabs, hunted them into the cave or caves of Dahra: and, upon the refusal of the Arabs to surrender, filled up the mouth of their retreat with combustibles, and eventually roasted alive the whole party—men, women, and children. The Maréchal St. Arnaud, who subsequently died in

it commemorates. Here is an official account from the commander-in-chief:—"Of seven hundred refractory and rebellious who took refuge in the caverns of Dahra, thirty," says the glory-hunting Marshal, "and thirty only, are alive; and of these thirty there are four only who are capable of labour, or indeed of motion." How precious to the Marshal's heart must be that harvest of misery from which he so reluctantly allows the discount of about one-half per cent. Four only out of seven hundred, he is happy to assure Christendom, remain capable of hopping about; as to working, or getting honest bread, or doing any service in this world to themselves or others, it is truly delightful to announce, for public information, that all such practices are put a stop to for ever.

Amongst the fortunate four, who retain the power of hopping, we must reckon the *Arab chieftain*, who is introduced into the colloquy in the character of respondent. He can hop, of course, *ex hypothesi*, being one of the ever lucky quaternion; he can hop a little also as a rhetorician; indeed, as to *that* he is too much for the Marshal; but on the other hand, he cannot see; the cave has cured him of any such impertinence as staring into other people's faces; he is also lame, the cave has shown him the absurdity of rambling about;—and, finally, he is a beggar; or, if he will not allow himself to be called by that name, upon the argument (which seems plausible) that he cannot be a beggar if he never begs, it is not the less certain that, in case of betting a sixpence, the chieftain would find it inconvenient to stake the cash.

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supreme command of the French army before Sebastopol, was *said* to have been concerned as a principal in this atrocity. Meantime the Arabs are not rightfully or specially any objects of legitimate sympathy in such a case; for they are quite capable of similar cruelties under any movement of religious fanaticism.

The Marshal, who apparently does not pique himself upon politeness, addresses the Arab by the following assortment of names—" Thief, assassin, traitor ! blind greybeard ! lame beggar." The three first titles, being probably mistaken for compliments, the Arab pockets in silence ; but to the double-barrelled discharges of the two last he replies thus :—" Cease *there*. Thou canst never make me beg for bread, for water, or for life ; my grey beard is from God ; my blindness and lameness are from thee." This is a pleasant way of doing business ; rarely does one find little accounts so expeditiously settled and receipted. Beggar ? But how if I do not beg ? Greybeard ? Put that down to the account of God. Cripple ? Put that down to your own. Getting sulky under this mode of fencing from the desert-born, the Marshal invites him to enter one of his new-made law courts, where he will hear of something probably *not* to his advantage. Our Arab friend, however, is no connoisseur in courts of law : small wale * of courts in the desert ; he does not so much " do himself the honour to decline " as he turns a deaf ear to this proposal, and on *his* part presents a little counter invitation to the Marshal

* *Wale* (Germanicè *wahl*), the old ballad word for *choice*. But the motive for using it in this place is in allusion to an excellent old Scottish story (not sufficiently known in the South), of a rustic laird, who profited by the hospitality of his neighbours, duly to get drunk once (and no more) every night, returning in the happiest frame of mind under the escort of his servant Andrew. In spite of Andrew, however, it sometimes happened that the laird fell off his horse ; and on one of these occasions, as he himself was dismounted from his saddle, his wig was dismounted from his cranium. Both fell together into a peat-moss, and both were together fished out by Andrew. But the laird, in his confusion, putting on the wig wrong side before, reasonably "jaloused" that this could not be his own wig, but some other man's, which suspicion he communicated to Andrew, who argued *contra* by this most conclusive reply—" Hout ! laird, there's nae wale o' wigs i' a peat-moss."

for a *pic-nic* party to the caves of Dahra. "Enter," says the unsparing sheik, "and sing and whistle in the cavern where the bones of brave men are never to bleach, are never to decay. Go, where the mother and infant are inseparable for ever—one mass of charcoal; the breasts that gave life, the lips that received it—all, all, save only where two arms, in colour and hardness like corroded iron, cling round a brittle stem, shrunken, warped, and where two heads are calcined. Even this massacre, no doubt, will find defenders in *your* country, for it is the custom of *your* country to cover blood with lies, and lies with blood." "And," says the facetious French Marshal, "here and there a sprinkling of ashes over both." ARAB.—"Ending in merriment, as befits ye. But *is* it ended?" But *is* it ended? Ay; the wilderness beyond Algiers returns an echo to those ominous words of the blind and mutilated chieftain. No, brave Arab, although the Marshal scoffingly rejoins that at least it is ended for *you*, ended it is not, for the great quarrel by which human nature pleads with such a fiendish spirit of warfare, carried on under the countenance of him who stands first in authority under the nation that stands second in authority amongst the leaders of civilisation; quarrel of that sort, once arising, does not go to sleep again until it is righted for ever. As the English martyr at Oxford said to his fellow-martyr—"Brother, be of good cheer, for we shall this day light up a fire in England that, by the blessing of God, will not be extinguished for ever,"—even so the atrocities of these hybrid campaigns between baffled civilisation on the one side, and barbarism on the other, provoked into frenzy, will, like the horrors of the middle passage amongst the children of Africa, rising again from the Atlantic, suddenly, at the bar of the British senate, sooner or later reproduce themselves, in strong reactions of the social mind throughout Christendom,

upon *all* the horrors of war that are wilful and superfluous. In that case there will be a consolation in reserve for the compatriots of those, the brave men, the women, and the innocent children, who died in that fiery furnace at Dahra.

"Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and *they*
To heaven." *

The caves of Dahra repeated the woe to the hills, and the hills to God. But such a furnace, though fierce, may be viewed as brief indeed if it shall terminate in permanently pointing the wrath of nations (as in this dialogue it has pointed the wrath of genius) to the particular outrage and class of outrages which it concerns. The wrath of nations is a consuming wrath, and the scorn of intellect is a withering scorn, for all abuses upon which either one or the other is led, by strength of circumstances, to settle itself *systematically*. The danger is for the most part that the very violence of public feeling should rock it asleep—the tempest exhausts itself by its own excesses—and the thunder of one or two immediate explosions, by satisfying the first clamours of human justice and indignation, is too apt to intercept that sustained roll of artillery which is requisite for the effectual assault of long established abuses. Luckily in the present case of the Dahra massacre there is the less danger of such a result, as the bloody scene has happened to fall in with a very awakened state of the public sensibility as to the evils of war generally, and with a state of expectation almost romantically excited as to the possibility of readily or permanently exterminating these evils.

Hope, meantime, even if unreasonable, becomes wise and

* Milton, in uttering his grief (but also his hopes growing out of this grief) upon a similar tragedy, viz., the massacre of the Protestant women and children by "the bloody Piedmontese."

holy when it points along a path of purposes that are more than usually beneficent. According to a fine illustration of Sir Philip Sidney's, drawn from the practice of archery, by attempting more than we can possibly accomplish, we shall yet reach farther than ever we *should* have reached with a less ambitious aim; we shall do much for the purification of war, if nothing at all for its abolition; and atrocities of this Algerine order are amongst the earliest that will give way. They will sink before the growing illumination, and (what is equally important) before the growing *combination* of minds acting simultaneously from various centres, in nations otherwise the most at variance. By a rate of motion continually accelerated, the gathering power of the press, falling in with the growing facilities of personal intercourse, is, day by day, bringing Europe more and more into a state of fusion, in which the sublime name of *Christendom* will continually become more and more significant, and will express a unity of the most awful order, viz., in the midst of strife, long surviving as to inferior interests and subordinate opinions, will express an agreement continually more close, and an agreement continually more operative, upon all capital questions affecting human rights, duties, and the interests of human *progress*. Before that tribunal, which every throb of every steam-engine, in printing-houses and on railroads, is hurrying to establish, all flagrant abuses of belligerent powers will fall prostrate; and, in particular, no form of pure undisguised murder will be any longer allowed to confound itself with the necessities of honourable warfare.

Much already *has* been accomplished on this path; more than people are aware of; so gradual and silent has been the advance. How noiseless is the growth of corn! Watch it night and day for a week, and you will never see it growing; but return after two months, and you will find

it all whitening for the harvest. Such, and so imperceptible, in the stages of their motion, are the victories of the press. Here is one instance. Just forty-seven years ago, on the shores of Syria, was celebrated by Napoleon Bonaparte, the most damnable carnival of murder that romance has fabled, or that history has recorded. Rather more than four thousand men—not (like Tyrolese or Spanish guerillas) even in pretence, "insurgent rustics," but regular troops, serving the Pacha and the Ottoman Sultan; not old men that might by odd fractions have been thankful for dismissal from a life of care or sorrow, but all young Albanians, in the early morning of manhood, the oldest not twenty-four —were exterminated by successive rolls of musketry, when helpless as infants, having their arms pinioned behind their backs like felons on the scaffold, and having surrendered their muskets (which else would have made so desperate a resistance) on the faith that they were dealing with soldiers and men of honour. I have elsewhere examined, as a question in casuistry, the frivolous pretences for this infamous carnage; but that examination I have here no wish to repeat; for it would draw off the attention from one feature of the case, which I desire to bring before the reader, as giving to this Jaffa tragedy a depth of atrocity wanting in that of Dahra. The four thousand and odd young Albanians had been seduced, trepanned, fraudulently decoyed, from a post of considerable strength, in which they could and would have sold their lives at a bloody rate, by a solemn promise of safety from authorized French officers. "But," said Napoleon, in part of excuse, "these men, my aides-de-camp, were poltroons: to save their own lives, they made promises which they ought *not* to have made." Suppose it so; and suppose the case one in which the supreme authority has a right to disavow his agents; what then? This entitles that authority to refuse his ratification

to the terms agreed on; but this, at the same time, obliges him to replace the hostile parties in the advantages from which his agents had wiled them by these terms. A robber, who even owns himself such, will not pretend that he may refuse the price of the jewel as exorbitant, and yet keep possession of the jewel. And next comes a fraudulent advantage, not obtained by a knavery in the aide-de-camp, but in the leader himself. The surrender of the weapons, and the submission to the fettering of the arms, were not concessions from the Albanians, filched by the representatives of Napoleon, acting (as *he* says) without orders, but by express falsehoods, emanating from himself. The officer commanding at Dahra could not have reached his enemy without the shocking resource which he employed: Napoleon could. The officer at Dahra violated no covenant: Napoleon did. The officer at Dahra had not by lies seduced his victims from their natural advantages: Napoleon had. Such was the atrocity of Jaffa in the year 1799. Now, the relation of that great carnage to the press, the secret argument through which that vast massacre connects itself with the progress of the press, is this: That in 1799, and the two following years, when most it had become important to search the character and acts of Napoleon, no European writer, with the solitary exception of Sir Robert Wilson, no section of the press, cared much to insist upon this, by so many degrees, the worst deed of modern * military life. From that deed all the

* "*Modern military life.*"—By modern I mean since the opening of the thirty years' war by the battle of Prague in the year 1618. In this war, the sack, or partial sack, of Magdeburg, will occur to the reader as one of the worst amongst martial ruffianisms. But this happens to be a hoax. It is an old experience, that, when once the demure muse of history has allowed herself to tell a lie, she never retracts it. Many are the falsehoods in our own history, which our children read traditionally for truths, merely because our uncritical grandfathers believed them to

waters of the Atlantic would not have cleansed him; and yet, since 1804, we have heard much oftener of the sick men whom he poisoned in his Syrian hospital (an act of merely erroneous humanity), and more of the Duc d'Enghien's execution than of either; though this, savage as it was, admits of such palliations as belong to doubtful provocations in the sufferer, and to extreme personal terror in the inflicter. Here then, we have

be such. Magdeburg was *not* sacked. What fault there was in the case belonged to the King of Sweden, who certainly was remiss in this instance, though with excuses more than were hearkened to at that time. Tilly, the Bavarian general, had no reason for severity in this case, and showed none. According to the regular routine of war, Magdeburg had become forfeited to military execution, which, let the reader remember, was not, in those days, a right of the general as against the enemy, and by way of salutary warning to other cities, lest they also should abuse the right of a reasonable defence, but was a right of the soldiery as against their own leaders. A town stormed was then a little perquisite to the ill-fed and ill-paid soldiers. So of prisoners. If I made a prisoner of "Signor Drew," see Shakspere's *Henry V.*, it was *my* business to fix his ransom: the general had no business to interfere with that. Mind that distinction, reader. Tilly might forego a parchment right that was his own, but how if it belonged to his hungry army? Magdeburg, therefore, had incurred the common penalty (which she must have foreseen) of obstinacy, and the only difference between *her* case and that of many another brave little town, that quietly submitted to the usual martyrdom, without howling through all the speaking-trumpets of history, was this—that the penalty was, upon Magdeburg, but partially enforced. Harte, the tutor of Lord Chesterfield's son, first published, in his Life of Gustavus Adolphus, an authentic diary of what passed at that time, kept by a Lutheran clergyman. This diary shows sufficiently that no real departures were made from the customary routine, except in the direction of mercy. But it is evident that the people of Magdeburg were a sort of German boars, of whom, it is notorious, that if you attempt in the kindest way to shear them, all you get is horrible yelling, and (the proverb asserts) very little wool. The case being a classical one in the annals of military outrages, I have noticed its real features.

a case of wholesale military murder, emanating from Christendom, not at all less treacherous than the worst of Asiatic murders: and yet this Christian atrocity hardly moved a vibration of anger, or a solitary outcry of protestation from the European press (then, perhaps, having the excuse of deadly fear for herself), or even from the press of moral England, having no such excuse. Fifty and odd years have passed; a less enormity is perpetrated, but again by a French leader: and, behold! Europe is *now* convulsed from side to side by unaffected indignation! So travels the press to victory: such is the light, and so broad, which it diffuses: such is the strength for action by which it combines the hearts of nations.

MELANCHTHON AND CALVIN.

Of Mr. Landor's notions in religion it would be useless, and without polemic arguments it would be arrogant, to say that they are false. It is sufficient to say that they are degrading. In the dialogue between Melanchthon and Calvin, it is clear that the former represents Mr. L. himself, and is not at all the Melanchthon whom we may gather from his writings. Mr. Landor has heard that he was gentle and timid in action; and he exhibits him as a mere development of that key-note; as a compromiser of all that is severe in doctrine; and as an effeminate picker and chooser in morals. God, in *his* conception of him, is not a father so much as a benign, but somewhat weak, old grandfather; and we, his grandchildren, being now and then rather naughty, are to be tickled with a rod made of feathers, but, upon the whole, may rely upon an eternity of sugar-plums. For instance, take the puny idea ascribed to Melanchthon upon *Idolatry;* and consider, for one moment, how little it corresponds to the vast machinery reared up

by God himself against this secret poison and dreadful temptation of human nature. Melanchthon cannot mean to question the truth or the importance of the Old Testament; and yet, if *his* view of idolatry (as reported by L.) be sound, the Bible must have been at the root of the worst mischief ever yet produced by idolatry. He begins by describing idolatry as "*Jewish;*" insinuating that it was an irregularity chiefly besetting the Jews. But how perverse a fancy! In the Jews, idolatry was a disease; in Pagan nations, it was the normal state. In a nation (if any such nation could exist) of *crétins* or of *lepers*, nobody would talk of cretinism or leprosy as of any morbid affection; *that* would be the regular and natural condition of man. But where either was spoken of with horror as a ruinous taint in human flesh, it would argue that naturally (and, perhaps, by a large majority) the people were uninfected. Amongst Pagans, nobody talked of idolatry—no such idea existed—because *that* was the regular form of religious worship. To be named at all, idolatry must be viewed as standing in opposition to some higher worship that is *not* idolatry. But, next, as we are all agreed that in idolatry there is something evil, and differ only as to the propriety of considering it a Jewish evil—in what does this evil lie? It lies, according to the profound Landorian Melanchthon, in this—that different idolaters figure the Deity under different forms: if they could all agree upon one and the same mode of figuring the invisible Being, there need be no quarrelling; in this case, consequently, there would be no harm in idolatry—none whatever. But, unhappily, it seems each nation, or sometimes section of a nation, has a different fancy: they get to disputing; and from that they get to boxing, in which it is argued, lies the true evil of idolatry. It is an *extra* cause of broken heads. One tribe of men represent the Deity as

a beautiful young man, with a lyre and a golden bow; another as a snake; and a third—Egyptians, for instance, of old—as a beetle or an onion; these last, according to Juvenal's remark, having the happy privilege of growing their own gods in their own kitchen-gardens. In all this there would be no harm, were it not for subsequent polemics and polemical assaults. Such, if we listen to Mr. L., is Melanchthon's profound theory * of a false idolatrous religion. Were the police everywhere on an English footing, and the magistrates as unlike as possible to Turkish Cadis, nothing could be less objectionable; but, as things are, the beetle-worshipper despises the onion-worshipper; which breeds ill blood; whence grows a cudgel; and from the cudgel a constable; and from the constable an unjust magistrate. Not so, Mr. Landor; thus did not Melanchthon speak: and if he *did*, and would defend it for a thousand times, then for a thousand times he would deserve to be trampled by posterity into that German mire which he sought to evade by his Grecian disguise.† The true evil of idolatry is this: There is one sole idea of God,

* "*Melanchthon's profound theory:*"—That the reader may not suppose me misrepresenting Mr. L, I subjoin his words, p. 224, vol. i.:—"The evil of idolatry is this—rival nations have raised up rival deities; war hath been denounced in the name of heaven; men have been murdered for the love of God; and such impiety hath darkened all the regions of the world, that the Lord of all things hath been mocked by all simultaneously as the Lord of Hosts." "The evil of idolatry is, not (we find) that it disfigures the Deity (in which, it seems, there might be no great harm), but that one man's disfiguration differs from another man's; which leads to quarrelling, and *that* to fighting."

† "*Grecian disguise:*"—The true German name of this learned reformer was *Schwarzerd* (black earth); but the homeliness and pun provoking quality of such a designation induced Melanchthon to mask it in Greek. By the way, I do not understand how Mr. Landor, the

which corresponds adequately to his total nature. Of this idea, two things may be affirmed : the first being—that it is at the root of all absolute grandeur, of all truth, and of all moral perfection ; the second being—that, natural and easy as it seems when once unfolded, it could only have been unfolded by revelation ; and, to all eternity, he that started with a false conception of God, could not, through any effort of his own, have exchanged it for a true one. All idolaters alike, though not all in equal degrees, by intercepting the idea of God through the prism of some representative creature that *partially* resembles God, refract, splinter, and distort that idea. Even the idea of light, of the pure, solar light—the old Persian symbol of God—has that depraving necessity. Light itself, besides being an *imperfect* symbol, is an incarnation for us. However pure itself, or in its original divine manifestation, for us it is incarnated in forms and in matter that are *not* pure : it gravitates towards physical alliances, and therefore towards unspiritual pollutions. And all experience shows that the tendency for man, left to his own imagination, is downwards. The purest symbol, derived from created things, can and will condescend to the grossness of inferior human natures, by submitting to mirror itself in more and more carnal representative symbols, until finally the mixed element of resemblance to God is altogether buried and lost. God, by this succession of imperfect interceptions, falls more and more under the taint and limitation of the *alien* elements associated with all created things ; and, for the ruin of all moral grandeur in man, every idolatrous nation left to itself

arch-purist in orthography, reconciles *his* spelling of the name to Greek orthodoxy : there is no Greek word that *could* be expressed by the English syllable "cthon." Such a word as Melancthon for Melan*chthon* would be a hybrid monster—neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring.

will gradually bring round the idea of God into the idea of a powerful demon. Many things check and disturb this tendency for a time; but finally, and under that intense civilisation to which man intellectually is always hurrying under the eternal evolution of physical knowledge, such a degradation of God's idea, ruinous to the *moral* capacities of man, would undoubtedly perfect itself, were it not for the kindling of a purer standard by revelation. Idolatry, therefore, is not merely *an* evil, and one utterly beyond the power of social institutions to redress, but, in fact, it is the fountain of all other evil that seriously menaces the destiny of the human race.

PORSON AND SOUTHEY.

The two dialogues between Southey and Porson relate to Wordsworth; and they connect Mr. Landor with a body of groundless criticism, for which vainly he will seek to evade his responsibility by pleading the caution posted up at the head of his Conversations, viz.—"Avoid a mistake in attributing to the *writer* any opinions in this book but what are spoken under his own name." If Porson, therefore, should happen to utter villanies that are indictable, *that* (you are to understand) is Porson's affair. Render unto Landor the eloquence of the dialogue, but render unto Porson any kicks which Porson may have merited by his atrocities against a man whom assuredly he never heard of, and probably never saw. Now, unless Wordsworth ran into Porson in the streets of Cambridge on some dark night about the era of the French Revolution, and capsized him into the kennel!—a thing which is exceedingly improbable, considering that Wordsworth was never tipsy except once in his life, yet, on the other hand, is exceeding probable, considering that Porson was very seldom otherwise—barring

this one opening for a collision, there is no human possibility or contingency known to insurance offices, through which Porson ever *could* have been brought to trouble his head about Wordsworth. It would have taken three witches, and three broom-sticks, clattering about his head, to have extorted from Porson any attention to a contemporary poet that did not give first-rate feeds. And a man that, besides his criminal conduct in respect of dinners, actually made it a principle to drink nothing but water, would have seemed so depraved a character in Porson's eyes that, out of regard to public decency, he would never have mentioned his name, had he even happened to know it. "Oh, no! he never mentioned *him*." Be assured of *that*. As to poetry, be it known that Porson read none whatever, unless it were either political or obscene. With no seasoning of either sort, "Wherefore," he would ask indignantly, "should I waste my time upon a poem?" Porson had read the Rolliad, because it concerned his political party; he had read the epistle of Obereea, Queen of Otaheite, to Sir Joseph Banks, because, if Joseph was rather too demure, the poem was *not*. Else, and with such exceptions, he condescended not to any metrical writer subsequent to the era of Pope, whose Eloisa to Abelard he could say by heart, and could even *sing* from beginning to end; which, indeed, he *would* do, whether you chose it or not, after a sufficient charge of brandy, and sometimes even though threatened with a cudgel, in case he persisted in his molestations. Waller he had also read, and occasionally quoted with effect. But as to a critique on Wordsworth, whose name had not begun to mount from the ground when Porson died,* as reasonably and character-

* An equal mistake it is in Mr. Landor to put into the mouth of Porson any vituperation of Mathias as one that had uttered opinions

istically might it have been put into the mouth of the Hetman Platoff. Instead of Porson's criticisms on writings which he never saw, let us hear Porson's account of a fashionable rout in an aristocratic London mansion : it was the only party of distinction that this hirsute but most learned Theban ever visited ; and his history of what passed (comic alike and tragic) is better worth preserving than "Brantome," or even than Swift's "Memoirs of a Parish Clerk." It was by the hoax of a young Cantab that the Professor was ever decoyed into such a party : the thing was a swindle ; but his report of its natural philosophy is not on that account the less picturesque :—

SOUTHEY.—Why do you repeat the word *rout* so often?

PORSON.—I was once *at* one by mistake; and really I saw there what you describe: and this made me repeat the word and smile. You seem curious.

SOUTHEY.—Rather, indeed.

upon Wordsworth. In the *Pursuits of Literature*, down to the fifteenth edition, there is no mention of Wordsworth's name. Southey is mentioned slightingly, and chiefly with reference to his then democratic principles ; but not Coleridge, and not Wordsworth. Mathias soon after went to Italy, where he passed the remainder of his life—died, I believe, and was buried—never, perhaps, having heard the name of Wordsworth. As to Porson, it is very true that Mathias took a few liberties with his private habits, such as his writing paragraphs in the little cabinet fitted up for the *gens de plume* at the *Morning Chronicle* Office, and other trifles. But these, though impertinences, were not of a nature seriously to offend. They rather flattered, by the interest which they argued in his movements. And with regard to Porson's main pretension, his exquisite skill in Greek, Mathias was not the man to admire this too little : his weakness, *if in that point he had* a weakness, lay in the opposite direction. His own Greek was not a burden that could have foundered a camel : he was neither accurate, nor extensive, nor profound. But yet Mr. Landor is wrong in thinking that he drew it from an Index. In his Italian, he had the advantage probably very much of Mr. Landor himself : at least, he wrote it with more fluency and compass ; and even his metrical efforts in that language were admired by Italians

PORSON.—I had been *dining out;* there were some who smoked after dinner: within a few hours, the fumes of their pipes produced such an effect on my head that I was willing to go into the air a little. Still I continued hot and thirsty; and an undergraduate, whose tutor was my old acquaintance, proposed that we should turn into an oyster-cellar, and refresh ourselves with oysters and porter. The rogue, instead of this, conducted me to a fashionable house in the neighbourhood of St. James's; and, although I expostulated with him, and insisted that we were going *up* stairs and not *down*, he appeared to me so ingenuous in his protestations to the contrary that I could well disbelieve him no longer. Nevertheless, receiving on the stairs many shoves and elbowings, I could not help telling him plainly—that, if indeed it *was* the oyster-cellar in Fleet Street, the company was much altered for the worse; and that, in future, I should frequent another. When the fumes of the pipes had left me, I discovered the deceit by the brilliancy and indecency of the dresses; and was resolved not to fall into temptation. Although, to my great satisfaction, no immodest proposal was directly made to me, I looked about anxious that no other man should know me beside *him* whose wantonness had conducted me thither; and I would have escaped, if I could have found the door, from which every effort I made appeared to remove me farther and farther. . . . A pretty woman said loudly, "He has no gloves on!" "What nails the creature has!" replied an older one: "Pianoforte keys wanting the white."

I pause to say that this, by all accounts which have reached posterity, was really no slander. The Professor's forks had become rather of the dingiest, probably through inveterate habits of scratching up Greek roots from diluvian mould, some of it older than Deucalion's flood, and very good, perhaps, for turnips, but less so for the digits which turn up turnips. What followed, however, if it were of a nature to be circumstantially repeated, must have been more trying to the sensibilities of the Greek oracle, and to the blushes of the policemen dispersed throughout the rooms, than even the harsh critique upon his nails; which, let the wits say what they would in their malice, were no doubt washed regularly enough once every three years. And, even if they were *not*, I should say that this is not so strong a fact as some that are reported about many

a continental professor. Mrs. Clermont, with the twofold neatness of an Englishwoman and a Quaker, told me that, on visiting Pestalozzi, the celebrated education professor, at Yverdun, about 1820, her first impression, from a distant view of his dilapidated premises, was profound horror at the grimness of his complexion, which struck her as no complexion formed by nature, but as a deposition from half a century of atmospheric rust—a most ancient *ærugo.* She insisted on a radical purification, as a *sine quo non* towards any interview with herself. The meek professor consented. Mrs. Clermont hired a stout Swiss charwoman, used to the scouring of staircases, kitchen floors, &c.; the professor, whom, on this occasion, one may call "the prisoner," was accommodated with a seat (as prisoners at the bar sometimes are with us) in the centre of a mighty washing-tub, and then scoured through a long summer forenoon, by the strength of a brawny Helvetian arm. "And now, my dear friend," said Mrs. Clermont to myself, "is it thy opinion that this was cruel? Some people say it *was;* and I wish to disguise nothing;—it was not mere soap that I had him scoured with, but soap and sand; so, say honestly, dost thee call *that* cruel?" Laughing no more than the frailty of my human nature compelled me, I replied, "Far from it; on the contrary, everybody must be charmed with her consideration for the professor, in not having him cleaned on the same principle as her carriage, viz., taken to the stable-yard, mopped severely" ("*mobbed,* dost thee say?" she exclaimed. "No, no," I said, "not mobbed, but *mopped,* until the gravel should be all gone"), "then pelted with buckets of water by firemen, and, finally, currycombed and rubbed down by two grooms, keeping a sharp *susurrus**

* *Susurrus:*—The reader, who has had any experience of stable usages, will know that grooms always keep up a *hissing* accompaniment whilst currycombing a horse as paviours do a groaning.

between them, so as to soothe his wounded feelings; after all which, a feed of oats might not have been amiss." The result, however, of this scouring extraordinary was probably as fatal as to Mambrino's helmet in Don Quixote. Pestalozzi issued, indeed, from the washing-tub like Aeson from Medea's kettle; he took his station amongst a younger and fairer generation; and the dispute was now settled whether he belonged to the Caucasian or Mongolian race. But his intellect was thought to have suffered seriously. The tarnish of fifty or sixty years seemed to have acquired powers of re-acting as a stimulant upon the professor's fancy! through the *rete mucosum*, or through—heaven knows what. He was too old to be converted to cleanliness; the Paganism of a neglected person at seventy becomes a sort of religion interwoven with the nervous system—just as the well-known *Plica Polonica* from which the French armies suffered so much in Poland, during 1807-8, though produced by neglect of the hair, will not be cured by extirpation of the hair. The hair becomes matted into Medusa locks, or what looks like snakes; and to cut these off is oftentimes to cause nervous frenzy, or other great constitutional disturbance. I never heard, indeed, that Pestalozzi suffered apoplexy from his scouring; but certainly his ideas on education grew bewildered, and will be found essentially damaged, after that great epoch—his baptism by water and sand.

Now, in comparison of an Orson like this man of Yverdun—this great Swiss reformer, who might, perhaps, have bred a pet variety of typhus fever for his own separate use—what signify Porson's nails, though worse than Caliban's or Nebuchadnezzar's?

This Greek professor, Porson—whose knowledge of English was so limited that his total cargo might have been embarked on board a walnut-shell, on the bosom of a slop

bason, and insured for three half-pence—astonishes me, that have been studying English for thirty years and upwards, by the strange discoveries that he announces in this field. One and all, I fear, are mares' nests. He discovered, for instance, on his first and last reception amongst aristocratic people, that in this region of society a female bosom is called her *neck*. But, if it really *had* been so called, I see no objection to the principle concerned in such disguises; and I see the greatest to that savage frankness which virtually is indicated with applause in the Porsonian remark. Let us consider. It is not that we *cannot* speak freely of the female bosom, and we do so daily. In discussing a statue, we do so without reserve; and in the act of suckling an infant, the bosom of every woman is an idea so sheltered by the tenderness and sanctity with which all but ruffians invest the organ of maternity, that no man scruples to name it, if the occasion warrants it. He suppresses it only as he suppresses the name of God; not as an idea that can itself contain any indecorum, but, on the contrary, as making other and more trivial ideas to become indecorous when associated with a conception rising so much above their own standard. Equally, the words, *affliction*, *guilt*, *penitence*, *remorse*, &c., are proscribed from the ordinary current of conversation amongst mere acquaintances; and for the same reason, viz., that they touch chords too impassioned and profound for harmonizing with the key in which the mere social civilities of life are exchanged Meantime, it is not true that any custom ever prevailed in *any* class of calling a woman's bosom her neck. Porson goes on to say, that for *his* part, he was born in an age when people had *thighs*. Well, a great many people have thighs still. But in all ages there must have been many of whom it is lawful to suspect such a fact zoologically; and yet, as men

honouring our own race, and all its veils of mystery, not too openly to insist upon it, which, luckily, there is seldom any occasion to do.

Mr. Landor conceives that we are growing worse in the pedantries of false delicacy. I think not. His own residence in Italy has injured his sense of discrimination. It is not his countrymen that have grown conspicuously more demure and prudish, but he himself that has grown in Italy more tolerant of what is really a blameable coarseness. Various instances occur in these volumes of that faulty compliance with Southern grossness. The tendencies of the age, among ourselves, lie certainly in *one* channel towards excessive refinement. So far, however, they do but balance the opposite tendencies in some other channels. The craving for instant effect in style—as it brings forward many disgusting Germanisms and other barbarisms—as it transplants into literature much slang from the street—as it reacts painfully upon the grandeurs of the antique scriptural diction, by recalling into *colloquial* use many consecrated words which thus lose their cathedral beauty—also operates daily amongst journalists, by the temptations of apparent strength that lurk in plain speaking or even in brutality. What other temptation, for instance, can be supposed to govern those who, in speaking of hunger as it affects our paupers, so needlessly revolt us by the very coarsest English word for the Latin word *venter?* Surely the word *stomach* would be intelligible to everybody, and yet disgust nobody. It would do for *him* that affects plain speaking; it would do for you and me that recoil from gross speaking. Signs from abroad speak the very same language, as to the *liberal* tendencies (in this point) of the nineteenth century. Formerly, it was treason for a Spaniard. even in a laudatory copy of verses, to suppose his own Queen

lowered to the level of other females by the possession of legs! Constitutionally, the Queen was incapable of legs. How then her Majesty contrived to walk, or could be supposed to dance, the Inquisition soon taught the poet was no concern of *his*. Royal legs for females were an inconceivable thing—except amongst Protestant nations; some of whom the Spanish Church affirmed to be even disfigured by tails! Having tails, of course they might have legs. But not *Catholic* queens. Now-a-days, so changed is all this, that if you should even express your homage to her Most Catholic Majesty, by sending her a pair of embroidered garters—which certainly pre-suppose legs—there is no doubt that the Spanish Minister of Finance would gratefully carry them to account—on the principle that "every little helps." Mr. Porson is equally wrong, as I conceive, in another illustration of this matter, drawn from the human toes, and specifically from the great toe. It is true, that, in refined society, upon any rare necessity arising for alluding to so inconsiderable a member of the human statue, generally this is done at present by the French term *doigt-de-pied*—though not always—as may be seen in various honorary certificates granted to chiropodists within the last twenty months. And whereas Mr. Porson asks pathetically—What harm has the great toe done, that it is never to be named? I answer—The greatest harm; as may be seen in the first act of "Coriolanus," where *Menenius* justly complains, that this arrogant subaltern of the crural system,

> "Being basest, meanest, vilest,
> Still goeth foremost."

Even in the villany of running away from battle, this unworthy servant still asserts precedency. I repeat, however, that the general tendencies of the age, as to the just limits of *parrhesia* (using the Greek word in a sense wider than

of old), are moving at present upon two opposite tacks; which fact it is, as in some other cases, that makes the final judgment difficult.

ROMAN IMPERATOR.

Mr. Landor, though really learned, often puts his learning into his pocket.

Thus, with respect to the German Empire, Mr. L. asserts that it was a chimera; that the *Imperium Germanicum* was a mere usage of speech, founded (if I understand him) not even in a legal fiction, but in a blunder; that a German *Imperator* never had a true historical existence; and, finally, that even the Roman title of *Imperator*—which unquestionably surmounted in grandeur all titles of honour that ever were or will be—ranged in dignity below the title of *Rex*.

I believe him wrong in every one of these doctrines; let us confine ourselves to the last. The title of Imperator was not *originally** either above or below the title of Rex, or even upon the same level; it was what logicians call *disparatè*—it radiated from a different centre, precisely as the modern title of *Decanus*, or *Dean*, which is originally astrological (see the elder Scaliger on Manilius), has no relation, whether of superiority or equality or inferiority, to the title of *Colonel*, nor the title of *Cardinal* any such relation to that of *Field-Marshal*; and quite as little had *Rex* to *Imperator*. Masters of Ceremonies, or Lord Chamberlains, may certainly *create* a precedency in favour of any title whatever in regard to any other title; but such a precedency for any of the cases before us would be arbitrary, and not growing out of any internal principle, though useful for purposes of convenience. As regards the Roman *Imperator*, originally like the Roman *Prætor*—this title, and the official rank, pointed exclusively to military dis-

tinctions. In process of time, the Prætor came to be a legal officer, and the Imperator to be the supreme political officer. But the motive for assuming the title of *Imperator*, as the badge or cognizance of the sovereign authority, when the great transfiguration of the Republic took place, seems to have been this: An essentially new distribution of political powers had become necessary, and this change masked itself to Romans, published itself in menaces and muttering thunder to foreign states, through the martial title of *Imperator*. A new equilibrium was demanded by the changes which time and luxury and pauperism had silently worked in the composition of Roman society. If Rome was to be saved from herself—if she was to be saved from the eternal flux and reflux, action and reaction, amongst her oligarchy of immense estates (which condition of things it was that forced on the great *sine quâ non* reforms of Cæsar, against all the babble of the selfish Cicero, of the wicked Cato, and of the debt-ridden Senate)—then it was indispensable that a new order of powers should be combined for bridling her internal convulsions. To carry her off from her own self-generated vortex, which would, in a very few years, have engulfed her, and drawn her down into fragments, some machinery as new as steam-power was required: her own native sails filled in the wrong direction. There were already powers in the constitution equal to the work, but distracted and falsely lodged. These must be gathered into one hand. And yet, as names are all-powerful upon our frail race, this re-cast must be *verbally* disguised. The title must be such as, whilst flattering the Roman pride, might yet announce to oriental powers a plenipotentiary of Rome who argued all disputed points, not so much strongly as (in Irish phrase) "with a strong back"—not so much piquing himself on Aristotelian syllogisms

that came within *Barbara* and *Celarent*, as upon thirty legions that stood within call. The Consulship was good for little; *that*, with some reservations, could be safely resigned into subordinate hands. The consular name, and the name of Senate, which was still suffered to retain an obscure vitality and power of resurrection, continued to throw a popular lustre over the government. Millions were duped. But the essential offices, the offices in which settled the organs of all the life in the administration, were these :—1. Of Military Commander-in-Chief (including such a partition of the provinces as might seal the authority in this officer's hands, and yet flatter the people through the Senate); 2. Of Censor, so as to watch the action of morals and social usages upon politics; 3. Of Pontifex Maximus; 4. And finally, of Tribune. The tribunitial power, next after the military power, occupied the earliest anxieties of the Cæsars. All these powers, and some others belonging to less dignified functions, were made to run through the same central rings (or what in mail-coach harness is called the *turrets*): the "ribbons" were tossed up to one and the same imperial coachman, looking as amiable as he could, but, in fact, a very truculent personage, having powers more unlimited than was always safe for himself. And now, after all this change of things, what was to be the *name?* By what *title* should men know him? Much depended upon that. The tremendous symbols of S. P. Q. R. still remained; nor had they lost their power. On the contrary, the great idea of the Roman destiny, as of some vast phantom moving under God to some unknown end, was greater than ever: the idea was now *so* great, that it had outgrown all its representative realities. *Consul* and *Proconsul* would no longer answer, because they represented too exclusively the interior or domestic fountains of power, and not the external relations

to the terraqueous globe which were beginning to expand with sudden accelerations of velocity. The *central* power could not be forgotten by any who were near enough to have tasted its wrath; but now there was arising a necessity for expressing, by some great unity of denomination, so as no longer to lose the totality in the separate partitions—the enormity of the *circumference*. A necessity for this had repeatedly been found in negotiations, and in contests of ceremonial rank with oriental powers, as between ourselves and China. With Persia, the greatest of these powers, an instinct of inevitable collision * had, for some time, been ripening. It became requisite that there should be a representative officer for the whole Roman grandeur, and one capable of standing on the same level as the Persian king of kings; and this necessity arose at the very same moment that a new organization was required of Roman power for *domestic* purposes. There is no doubt that both purposes were consulted in the choice of the title *Imperator*. The chief alternative title was that of *Dictator*. But to this, as regarded Romans, there were two objections—first, that it was a mere *provisional* title, always commemorating a transitional emergency, and pointing to some happier condition, which the extraordinary powers of the officer ought soon to establish. It was in the nature of a problem, and continually asked for its own solution. The Dictator dictated. He was the greatest *ipse dixit* that ever was heard of. It reminded the people *verbally* of despotic power and autocracy. Then again, as regarded foreign nations, unacquainted with the Roman constitution, and throughout the servile

* Herod the Great, and his father Antipater, owed the favour of Rome, and, finally, the throne of Judea, to the seasonable election which they made between Rome and Persia; but not made without some doubts, as between forces hardly yet brought to a satisfactory equation.

East incapable of understanding it, the title of *Dictator* had no meaning at all. *The Speaker* is a magnificent title in England, and makes brave men sometimes shake in their shoes. But yet, if from rustic ignorance it is not understood, even that title means nothing.

Of the proudest Speaker that England ever saw, viz., Sir Edward Seymour, it is recorded that his grandeur failed him, sank under him, like the Newgate drop, at the very moment when his boiling anger most relied upon and required it. He was riding near Barnet, when a rustic waggoner ahead of him, by keeping obstinately the middle of the road, prevented him from passing. Sir Edward motioned to him magnificently that he must turn his horses to the left. The carter, on some fit of the sulks (perhaps from the Jacobinism innate in man), despised this pantomime, and sturdily persisted in his mutinous disrespect. On which Sir Edward shouted : "Fellow, do you know who I am?" "*Noo-ah*," replied our rebellious friend, meaning, when faithfully translated, *no*. "Are you aware, sirrah," said Sir Edward, now thoroughly incensed, "that I am the right honourable the Speaker? At your peril, sir, in the name of the Commons of England, in Parliament assembled, quarter instantly to the left." This was said in that dreadful voice which sometimes reprimanded penitent offenders, kneeling at the bar of the House. The carter, more struck by the terrific tones than the words, spoke an aside to "Dobbin" (his "thill"* horse), which procured an opening to the blazing Speaker, and then replied thus—"Speaker! Why, if so be as thou can'st speak, whoy-y-y-y-y" (in the tremulous undulation with which he was used to utter his sovereign whoah-h-h-h to

* *i.e.*, Shaft-horse.—See Shakspere's *Love's Labour's Lost.*

his horses), "Whoy-y-y-y didn't-a speak afore?" The waggoner, it seemed, had presumed Sir Edward, from his mute pantomime, to be a dumb man; and all which the proud Speaker gained, by the proclamation of his style and title, was to be exonerated from that suspicion, but to the heavy discredit of his sanity. A Roman Dictator stood quite as poor a chance with foreigners, as our Speaker with a rustic. "Dictator! let him dictate to his wife; but he shan't dictate to us." Any title, to prosper with distant nations, must rest upon the basis of arms. And this fell in admirably with the political exigency for Rome herself. The title of *Imperator* was liable to no jealousy. Being entirely a military title, it clashed with no civil pretensions whatever. Being a military title, that recorded a triumph over external enemies in the field, it was dear to the patriotic heart; whilst it directed the eye to a quarter where all increase of power was concurrent with increase of benefit to the State. And again, as the honour had been hitherto purely titular, accompanied by some *auctoritas*, in the Roman sense (not always honour, for Cicero was an Imperator on account of Cilician exploits, which he himself reports with laughter), but no separate authority in our modern sense, even in military circles it was open to little jealousy; nor apparently could ripen into a shape that ever *would* be so, since, according to all precedent, it would be continually balanced by the extension of the same title, under popular military suffrage, to other fortunate leaders. Who could foresee, at the inauguration of this reform, that this precedent would be abolished? who could guess that henceforwards no more triumphs (but only a sparing distribution of triumphal decorations); henceforwards no more imperatorial titles for anybody outside of the one consecrated family? All this was hidden in the bosom of the earliest

Imperator: he seemed, to the great mass of the people, perfectly innocent of civic ambition: he rested upon his truncheon—*i. e.*, upon S. P. Q. R.: like Napoleon, he said, "I am but the first soldier of the republic," that is, the most dutiful of her servants; and, like Napoleon, under cover of this *paludamentum*, of this supreme martial robe, he had soon filched every ensign of authority by which the organs of public power could speak. But, at the beginning, this title of *Imperator* was the one by far the best fitted to mask all this, to disarm suspicion, and to win the confidence of the people.

The title, therefore, began in something like imposture; and it was not certainly at first the gorgeous title into which it afterwards blossomed. The earth did not yet ring with it. The rays of its diadem were not then the first that said *All hail!* to the rising, the last that said *Farewell!* to the setting sun. But still it was already a splendid distinction; and, in a Roman ear, it must have sounded far above all competition from the trivial title (in *that* day) of "Rex," unless it were the Persian Rex, viz., "Rex Regum." Romans *gave* the title; they stooped not to accept it.* Even Mark Antony, in the all-magnificent

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* "*Stooped not to accept it*:"—The notion that Julias Cesar, who of all men must have held cheapest the title of *Rex*, had seriously intrigued to obtain it, arose (as I conceive) from two mistakes: first, from a misinterpretation of a figurative ceremony in the pageant of the Lupercalia. The Romans were ridiculously punctilious in this kind of jealousy. They charged Pompey at one time with a plot for making himself king, because he wore white bandages round his thighs; for *white*, in olden days, was as much the regal colour as *purple*. Think, dear reader, of us—of you and me—being charged with making ourselves kings, because we may choose to wear white cotton drawers. Pompey was very angry, and swore bloody oaths that it was *not* ambition which had cased his thighs in white *fasciæ*. "Why, what is it then?" said a grave citizen. "What is it, man?"

description of him by Shakspere's Cleopatra, could give it in showers—kings waited in his ante-room, "and from his pocket fell crowns and sceptres." The title of *Imperator* was indeed reaped in glory that transcended the glory of earth, but it was not, therefore, sown in dishonour.

We are all astonished at Mr. Landor—myself and three hundred select readers. What *can* he mean by tilting against the Imperator—Semper Augustus? Before *him* the sacred fire (that burned from century to century) went pompously in advance, *επομπευς*—before *him* the children of Europe and Asia—of Africa and the islands, rode as *dorypheroi; his somatophulakes* or body-guards, were princes; and *his* empire, when burning out in Byzantium, furnished from its very ruins the models for our western honours and ceremonial. Had it even begun in circumstances of ignominy, *that* would have been cured easily by its subsequent triumph. Many are the titles of earth that have found a glory in looking back to the humility of their origin as its most memorable feature. The fisherman who sits upon Mount Palatine, in some respects the grandest of all poten-

replied Pompey, "it is rheumatism." Dogberry must have had a hand in this charge: "Dost thou hear, thou varlet? Thou art charged with incivism; and it shall go hard with me but I will prove thee to thy face a false knave, and guilty of flat rheumatism." The other reason which has tended to confirm posterity in the belief that Cæsar really coveted the title of *Rex*, was the confusion of the truth arising with Greek writers. *Basileus*, the term by which indifferently they designated the mighty Artaxerxes and the pettiest *regulus*, was the original translation used for *Imperator*. Subsequently, and especially after Dioclesian had approximated the aulic pomps to eastern models, the terms *Autocrator*, *Kaisar*, *Augustus*, *Sebastos*, &c., came more into use. But after Trajan's time, or even to that of Commodus, generally the same terms which expressed *Imperator* and *Imperatorial* (viz., *Basileus* and *Basilikos*) to a Grecian ear expressed *Rex* and *Regalis*.

tates, as one wielding both earthly and heavenly thunders, is the highest example of this. Some, like the Mamelukes of Egypt, and the early Janizaries of the Porte, have glorified themselves in being slaves. Others, like the Caliphs, have founded their claims to men's homage in the fact of being *successors* to those who (between ourselves) were knaves. And once it happened to Professor Wilson and myself, that we travelled in the same post-chaise with a most agreeable madman, who, amongst a variety of other select facts which he communicated, was kind enough to give us the following etymological account of our much-respected ancestors the Saxons; which furnishes a further illustration (quite unknown to the learned) of the fact—that honour may glory in deducing itself from circumstances of humility. He assured us that these worthy Pagans were a league, comprehending every single brave man of German blood; so much so, that on sailing away they left that unhappy land in a state of universal cowardice, which accounts for the licking it subsequently received from Napoleon. The Saxons were very poor, as brave men too often are. In fact, they had no breeches, and, of course, no silk stockings. They had, however, *sacks*, which they mounted on their backs, whence naturally their name *Sax-on*. *Sacks-on!* was the one word of command, and *that* spoken the army was ready. In reality, it was treason to take them off. But this indorsement of their persons was not assumed on any Jewish principle of humiliation; on the contrary, in the most flagrant spirit of defiance to the whole race of man. For they proclaimed that, having no breeches nor silk stockings of their own, they intended, wind and weather permitting, to fill these same sacks with those of other men. The Welshmen then occupying England were reputed to have a good stock of both, and in quest of this Welsh ward-

robe the *Sacks-on* army sailed. With what success it is not requisite to say, since here in one post-chaise, one thousand four hundred and thirty years after, were three of their posterity, the professor, the madman, and myself, indorsees (as you may say) of the original indorsers, who were all well equipped with the objects of this great *Sacks-on* exodus.

It is true that the word *emperor* is not in every situation so impressive as the word *king*. But *that* arises in part from the latter word having less of specialty about it; it is more catholic, and to that extent more poetic; and in part from accidents of position which disturb the relations of many other titles besides. The *Proconsul* had a grander sound, as regarded military expeditions, than the principal from whom he emanated. The *Surena* left a more awful remembrance of his title upon the comrades of Julian, in his Persian expedition, than the Surena's master. And there are many cases extant in which the word *angel* strikes a deeper key—cases where power is contemplated as well as beauty or mysterious existence—than the word archangel, though confessedly higher in the hierarchies of heaven.

Let me now draw the reader's attention to *Count Julian*, a great conception of Mr. Landor's.

The fable of Count Julian (that is, when comprehending all the parties to that web, of which *he* is the centre) may be pronounced the grandest which modern history unfolds. It is, and it is *not*, scenical. In some portions (as the fate so mysterious of Roderick, and in a higher sense of Julian) it rises as much above what the stage could illustrate, as does Thermopylæ above the petty details of narration. The man was mad that, instead of breathing from a hurricane of harps some mighty ode over Thermopylæ, fancied the little conceit of weaving it into a metrical novel or succession of incidents. Yet on the other hand, though rising higher,

Count Julian sinks lower: though the passions rise far above Troy, above Marathon, above Thermopylæ, and are such passions as could not have existed under Paganism, in some respects they condescend and pre-conform to the stage. The characters are all different, all marked, all in *position;* by which, never assuming fixed attitudes as to purpose and interest, the passions are deliriously complex, and the situations are of corresponding grandeur. Metius Fuffetius, Alban traitor! that wert torn limb from limb by antagonist yet confederate chariots, thy tortures, seen by shuddering armies, were not comparable to the unseen tortures in Count Julian's mind; who—whether his treason prospered or not, whether his dear outraged daughter lived or died, whether his king were trampled in the dust by the horses of infidels, or escaped as a wreck from the fiery struggle, whether his dear native Spain fell for ages under misbelieving hounds, or, combining her strength, tossed off *them,* but then also *himself,* with equal loathing from her shores—saw, as he looked out into the mighty darkness, and stretched out his penitential hands vainly for pity or for pardon, nothing but the blackness of ruin, and ruin that was too probably to career through centuries. "To this pass," as Cæsar said to his soldiers at Pharsalia, "had his enemies reduced him;" and Count Julian might truly say, as he stretched himself a rueful suppliant before the Cross, listening to the havoc that was driving onwards before the dogs of the Crescent, "*My* enemies, because they would not remember that I was a man, forced *me* to forget that I was a Spaniard: to forget thee, O native Spain! and, alas! thee, O faith of Christ!"

The story is wrapt in gigantic mists, and looms upon one like the Grecian fable of Œdipus; and there will be great reason for disgust, if the deep Arabic researches now going

on in the Escurial, or at Vienna, should succeed in stripping it of its grandeurs. For, as it stands at present, it is the most fearful lesson extant of the great moral, that crime propagates crime, and violence inherits violence; nay, a lesson on the awful *necessity* which exists at times, that one tremendous wrong should blindly reproduce itself in endless retaliatory wrongs. To have resisted the dread temptation, would have needed an angel's nature: to have yielded, is but human; should it, then, plead in vain for pardon? and yet, by some mystery of evil, to have perfected this human vengeance, is, finally, to land all parties alike, oppressor and oppressed, in the passions of hell.

Mr. Landor, who always rises with his subject, and dilates like Satan into Teneriffe or Atlas, when he sees before him an antagonist worthy of his powers, is probably the one man in Europe that has adequately conceived the situation, the stern self-dependency, and the monumental misery of Count Julian. That sublimity of penitential grief, which cannot accept consolation from man, cannot hear external reproach, cannot condescend to notice insult, cannot so much as *see* the curiosity of bystanders; that awful carelessness of all but the troubled deeps within his own heart, and of God's spirit brooding upon their surface, and searching their abysses, never was so majestically described as in the following lines; it is the noble Spaniard, Hernando, comprehending and loving Count Julian in the midst of his treasons, who speaks:—Tarik, the gallant Moor, having said that at last the Count must be happy; for that

"Delicious calm
Follows the fierce enjoyment of revenge."

Hernando replies thus:—

That calm was never his; no other *will* be,
Not victory, that o'ershadows him, sees he:

No airy and light passion stirs abroad
To ruffle or to soothe him; all are quell'd
Beneath a mightier, sterner, stress of mind.
Wakeful he sits, and lonely, and unmoved,
Beyond the arrows, shouts, and views of men.
As oftentimes an eagle, ere the sun
Throws o'er the varying earth his early ray,
Stands solitary—stands immovable
Upon some highest cliff, and rolls his eye,
Clear, constant, unobservant, unabased,
In the cold light above the dews of morn."

One change suggests itself to me as possibly for the better, viz., if the magnificent line—

"Beyond the arrows, shouts, and views of men"—

were transferred to the secondary object, the eagle, placed after what is *now* the last line, it would give a fuller rythmus to the close of the entire passage; it would be more *literally* applicable to the majestic and solitary bird, than to the majestic and solitary man; whilst a figurative expression even more impassioned might be found for the utter self-absorption of Count Julian's spirit—too grandly sorrowful to be capable of disdain.

It completes the picture of this ruined prince, that Hernando, the sole friend (except his daughter) still cleaving to him, dwells with yearning desire upon his death, knowing the necessity of this consummation to his own secret desires, knowing the forgiveness which would settle upon his memory after that last penalty should have been paid for his errors, comprehending the peace that would then swallow up the storm:—

"For his own sake I could endure his loss,
Pray for it. and thank God: yet mourn I must
Him above all, so great, so bountiful,
So blessed once!"

It is no satisfaction to Hernando that Julian should "yearn

for death with speechless love," but Julian *does* so: and it is in vain now, amongst these irreparable ruins, to wish it otherwise.

> "'Tis not my solace that 'tis* *his* desire:
> Of all who pass us in life's drear descent
> We grieve the most for those who *wish'd* to die."

How much, then, is in this brief drama of Count Julian, chiselled, as one might think, by the hands of that sculptor who fancied the great idea of chiselling Mount Athos into a demigod, which almost insists on being quoted: which seems to rebuke and frown on one for *not* quoting it: passages to which, for their solemn grandeur, one raises one's hat as at night in walking under the Coliseum; passages which, for their luxury of loveliness, should be inscribed on the phylacteries of brides, or upon the frescoes of Ionia, illustrated by the gorgeous allegories of Rubens.

> "Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,
> Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore"

Yet, reader, in spite of time, one word more on the subject we are quitting. Father Time is certainly become very

* "*'Tis:*"—Scotchmen and Irishmen (for a reason which it may be elsewhere worth while explaining) make the same mistake of supposing *'tis* and *'twas* admissible in prose: which is shocking to an English ear, for since an early part of the last century they have become essentially poetic forms, and cannot, without a sense of painful affectation and sentimentality, be used in conversation or in *any* mode of prose. Mr. Landor does not make *that* mistake, but the reduplication of the *'tis* in this line,—will he permit me to say?—is dreadful. He is wide awake to such blemishes in other men of all nations. He blazes away all day long against the trespasses of that class, like a man in spring protecting corn-fields against birds. And if ever I publish that work on *Style*, which for years has been in preparation, I fear that, from Mr. Landor, it will be necessary to cull some striking flaws in composition, were it only that in *his* works must be sought some of its most striking brilliancies.

importunate and clamorously shrill since he has been fitted up with that horrid railway-whistle ; and even old Mother Space is growing rather impertinent, when she speaks out of monthly journals licensed to carry but small quantities of bulky goods ; yet one thing I must say in spite of them both.

It is, that although we have had from men of memorable genius, Shelley in particular, both direct and indirect attempts (some of them powerful attempts) to realize the great idea of Prometheus, which idea is *so* great, that (like the primeval majesties of Human Innocence, of Avenging Deluges that are past, of Fiery Visitations yet to come) it has had strength to pass through many climates, and through many religions, without essential loss, but surviving, without tarnish, every furnace of chance and change ; so it is that, after all has been done which intellectual power *could* do since Æschylus (and since Milton in his Satan), no embodiment of the Promethean situation, none of the Promethean character, fixes the attentive eye upon itself with the same secret feeling of fidelity to the vast archetype, as Mr. Landor's "Count Julian." There is in this modern aërolith the same jewelly lustre, which cannot be mistaken ; the same "*non imitabile fulgur*," and the same character of "fracture," or *cleavage*, as mineralogists speak, for its beaming iridescent grandeur, redoubling under the crush of misery. The colour and the coruscation are the same when splintered by violence ; the tones of the rocky* harp are the same when swept by sorrow. There is

* "*Rocky harp:*"—There are now known other cases beside the ancient one of Memnon's statue, in which the "deep grooved" granites, or even the shifting sands of wildernesses, utter mysterious music to ears that watch and wait for the proper combination of circumstances.—See some travels, I forget whose, in the neighbourhood of Mount Sinai and its circumjacencies.

the same spirit of heavenly persecution against his enemy, persecution that would have hung upon his rear, and "burn'd after him to the bottomless pit," though it had yawned for both; there is the same gulf fixed between the possibilities of their reconciliation, the same immortality of resistance, the same eternity of abysmal sorrow. Did Mr Landor *consciously* cherish this Æschylean ideal in composing "Count Julian?" I know not: there it is.

END OF EIGHTH VOLUME.

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